The Nation.

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How the Bush Jump-Started Christmas

RICHARD LINGEMAN

With apologies to Dr. Seuss

In Whoverville town
The Whos were quite down
The economy was glum
And Christmas wouldn't come!

The news of all this made the Bush very sad
A prosperous Yule he wanted awfully bad.
If the people were merry and spent lots of dough
The economy'd pick up. The recession would go.

Yes, the Bush LOVED Xmas, the holly and tree
He loved even more to pump up G.N.P.
So while kids dreamed of sugarplums deep in slumbers
The Bush and the Darman were crunching the numbers.

But however they sliced 'em
Cut 'em or diced 'em
The results were quite clear:
No uptick this year.

"I've got to do something!" moaned the Bush right out loud.
"Yes, you've got to do something!" caroled the G.O.P. crowd.
So quickly he turned to economic advisers
And asked, "Why oh why are people such misers?"
"The reason," said the gnomes, "consumer duty they shirk
Is so many are afraid they'll soon have no work."

Said a man on his right: "Now don't be a wimp.
If you can't do the job, then call in Jack Kemp.
Serve the rich a fat tax cut with all of the fixins,
Then sit back and wait till supply side kicks in."
"Oh I wish I could wait," wailed the Bush with a tear,
"But without a green Christmas I'm out on my ear."

Then he had an idea!
A colossal idea
The Bush
Had a colossal, lousy idea!

Without fuss or ado to his closet he sped
Dug out his old Santa suit—color, bright red.
He adorned his dog Millie like a reindeer head to paws
And drafted wife Bar to play jolly Ms. Claus.

They climbed in his limo with a sack full of cash,
"To the mall, James!" he cried and they were off in a flash.
To Whoverville they sped, sirens on, lights a-blinking
"Gonna save this Xmas," said Santy-Bush, eyes a-twinkling.

When he got to the mall he rushed to a store,
Flinging money around, buying presents galore.
To the shoppers he said, "Don't be shy, don't hang back!
Spend all you can—we gotta take up the slack!
If you don't have the cash, then buy it on credit
Go into debt. There, the D word—I've said it!"

But suddenly appeared a right jolly old elf—
Short, with a beard—"Why, it's Santa himself!"
The Whos all cried out as they hastened to cheer him,
While the Bush kept talking with no one to hear him.

And so the Bush failed to give Xmas a jump-start
The people saw through him—he was playing a sham part.
The one Santa this year he could act in
fine fettle
Is the one on the corner with a bell and
a kettle.

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LETTERS.

DAM SHAME

Hellertown, Pa.

Thank you for "Water Fights: Damming of Native Lands" by Steve Turner and Todd Nachowitz [Oct. 21]. Unfortunately, this kind of exploitation is nothing new. In 1954 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the Garrison Dam on the Missouri River in North Dakota. It created a 140-mile-long lake, cynically named Lake Sakawakea. What was billed at the time as a flood-control project today is used mainly for recreation and cheap hydroelectric power. The lake cut in two the Fort Berthold Reservation and inundated the best agricultural land and grasslands. Besides that, it forced the relocation of villages, churches and, perhaps worst of all to Native Americans, burial grounds. Our church has been working with the people of Fort Berthold in a project in which we minister to each other: We try to help them with their needs and they teach us about their lives, including the damage done by dam-builders who just pushed the Native Americans aside. Thirty-seven years after Garrison Dam was built, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara people still grieve.

Glenn Kranzley

VALUABLE NEW RESOURCE OR . . .

New York City

"A Word From Your Friendly Drug Company" by Steven T. Taylor and Morton Mintz [Oct. 21] gave a one-sided and distorted view of video news releases. Rather than deceive, VNRs are an effective and, yes, cost-effective means of informing the public about medical advances, new products in all fields, entertaining news items, consumer news and public affairs. While an occasional VNR may try to pass something off as news that is bogus, we contend that because of their cost, the incidence of such occurrences is lower than among print press releases. Please note that the vast majority of the approximately 4,000 VNRs produced annually are not from pharmaceutical companies. In truth, a veritable "Who's Who" of consumer-awareness and watchdog groups, labor organizations, political action groups, environmental activists, feminist causes, senior citizen groups and government agencies produce and distribute VNRs. Let's look at some facts:

§ VNRs are clearly identified as public relations video. As the nation's leading distributor of VNRs (1,503 in 1990), Medialink insists that all its clients clearly identify the producer and the client paying for the VNR, both on advisories transmitted to stations and on a slate preceding the actual video.

§ VNRs are provided free to stations, as are press releases, for unrestricted use. They are rarely used without heavy editing. VNRs regularly contain video not available elsewhere.

§ "B-roll" (footage without audio) is provided for background so news producers can develop and localize their stories.

§ VNR producers have reputations to protect. Many are former network news professionals who strive to maintain network-quality news standards. Medialink's staff is drawn from the news departments at CBS News, ABC News, Visnews, CNN, several major local TV stations, Knight-Ridder newspapers, Dow Jones newspapers and U.P.I., among others.

§ Even news organizations produce VNRs. On October 19 *Time* magazine produced and distributed a VNR reporting on its exclusive excerpting of Oliver North's book, *Under Fire*. It ran on NBC's *Nightly News* and elsewhere. NBC Evening News head Steve Friedman said, "What Time did is all part of the ongoing video news revolution" (*Variety*, Oct. 28).

Let's not stifle an important source of information or seek to censor sources of legitimate opinion. Rather, let's insist on ethical guidelines that insure full and accurate information.

Nick Peters
vice president, Medialink

. . . VILE, NOXIOUS RUBBISH?

Toronto

I was employed for a brief time as a video news release producer, and your revelations about creating and distributing VNRs hit the nail on the head. It was my job to insure that each VNR resembled "real news" as closely as possible, while still including a subtext of product promotion. An average viewer is unlikely to spot this sort of fakery, especially since P.R. firms frequently recruit former journalists as writers and producers. Even TV reporters can never be sure about the authenticity of the interviews or the visuals in VNRs. I know of one producer who got together some students to shout slogans and wave flags to create a bogus pep rally for a university's VNR. He also deliberately used harsh lighting, extraneous background noise and a bit of shaky hand-held-camera work to make it appear "more real." Typically, the "interviews" included in VNRs are carefully managed, involving much coaching and numerous takes—not to mention generous sums of money when doctors are involved.

In this age of satellite news delivery, VNR material gets around like a bad case of the flu. The footage used in a VNR often ends up in a station's video library and could easily resurface a year later in another item, then get picked up by a news service like CNN and carried around the world. The origin of the footage would be long since forgotten.

Graham Webster

WOMAN WARRIOR FOR PEACE

Danbury, Conn.

In "Women Warriors?" [Oct. 28] Annette Fuentes concludes that women should not serve in combat units of the military forces. I disagree and think we must allow women to fight, and if men are drafted women, too, should be on call. I served in the Army for two and a half years during World War II, when women were confined to noncombat roles. Now I belong to Veterans For Peace, dedicated to finding peaceful solutions to world problems. However, whenever women are protected—in industry, in the military or by laws of a domestic nature—they pay for it. They pay in loss of power, income, prestige and self-confidence. Protection is an excuse for containment and control—a put-down.

Frances L. Baris

FUENTES REPLIES

Brooklyn, N.Y.

I agree with Frances L. Baris that the answer is to work against militarism and its related violence against women here and abroad. I did in fact concede that restrictions against women in combat roles should be dropped, because maintaining inequalities anywhere is wrong. But neither is combat duty an achievement that will empower women and improve the planet.

Annette Fuentes

MEAN STREETS

New York City

Many in the human rights community have stories about Elliott Abrams ["Watching Rights," Nov. 4]. Mine concerns Abrams's role as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in the case of my client, Patricia Lara. In 1986 Lara was invited to the prestigious Maria Moors Cabot award dinner of the Columbia University School of Journalism, her alma mater. However, she was detained and excluded from the United States on unspecified political grounds. Abrams, as the Reagan Administration's spokesman, charged Lara on *60 Minutes* with being involved in "terrorist activities" and called her a "Cuban agent." He approached hysteria when he declared, "She ought to be detained! She should not be walking the streets of this country!"

Abrams's charges caused many to back away from Lara despite her vehement denials. (One stalwart throughout, though, was the government of Colombia, which protested her treatment.) With the change in Administration, the U.S. government reopened Lara's case and this year granted her a normal five-year visa. Now it is Abrams who is at risk of not being able to walk the streets of this country.

Arthur C. Helton
Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

LONGING

Pueblo, Colo.

Elliott Abrams's guilty plea reminded me of Hilaire Belloc's "Epitaph on the Politician": "Here, richly, with ridiculous display,/The Politician's corpse was laid away./While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged,/I wept: for I had longed to see him hanged."

Lois Remple

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EDITORIALS.

Nuclear Halt

Secretary of State James Baker recently warned that the United States may now face a "Yugoslavia with nukes"—the former Soviet Union. Now is the moment for the United States to take action to bring the nuclear age to an end. President Bush's announcement, on September 27, of unilateral nuclear arms cuts was a beginning, but much more needs to be done.

The breakaway Soviet republics represent the threat of instant proliferation of nuclear powers. Almost all the republics have tactical nuclear weapons, and in addition to Russia, three republics have heavy intercontinental missiles—Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan. Although the republics say they want—ultimately—to be "nuclear-free," at the moment they insist on control over the nuclear weapons on their soil.

The United States and the central authority in the Soviet Union should continue the process they started of eliminating whole classes of nuclear weapons and agree to a comprehensive test ban. As a recent Institute for Policy Studies briefing points out, the broader proliferation problem must be addressed. The two former nuclear foes control about 98 percent of the nuclear weapons in the world. If both stopped making nuclear material, then the United States and the Soviet republics could seek agreements from others in the nuclear club to cease production as well. Together they could propose a United Nations mandate for a worldwide ban on the production of military nuclear material. Like the weapons cuts already undertaken by the United States and the Soviet Union, a nuclear manufacturing ban could begin with unilateral action.

This is the right time for both countries to act. President Gorbachev or whoever is in charge faces the immediate prob-

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lem of eliminating the nuclear capability of the newly independent republics. Shutting down unsafe and antiquated facilities would be an important step toward that goal and would minimize the very real risk of nuclear accidents. The United States also will benefit from keeping the nuclear apparatus out of the hands of the republics. Action to halt nuclear production is something the United States can do now. Delay only increases the danger.

West and East

In Maastricht twelve members of the European Community reached another stage on the road toward some form of union, notably with the pledge to introduce a common currency, the ecu, before the end of the millennium. In Byelorussia, the hosts, together with the Russians and the Ukrainians, in principle set up a Slavic commonwealth; in practice, they shattered not just the Soviet Union but also links going well back into czarist times. Capital is thus strangely working in two opposite directions. In the West, while consolidating its rule, it gradually obliterates the frontiers of the nation-state. In the East, on the contrary, it opens its reign with a dangerous revival of nationalism. But the two trends have one point in common: Everywhere Europe is now being shaped from above, without the active participation of the people.

The third stage of the so-called Economic and Monetary Union, involving both a common currency and a joint central bank based on the German model, could be introduced in 1997, if seven of the twelve members pass the convergence tests (low inflation, budget deficit below 3 percent and public debt below 60 percent of the gross domestic product, etc.). But it will definitely be introduced by 1999, even if a smaller number qualify. Britain was given the right to opt out but not the right to veto.

The road toward political union, with a common defense and joint foreign policy, is much less clearly defined. So is the Social Charter, which is supposed to provide some guarantees for workers, such as equal pay for women. Yet even the minimal social legislation required proved too much for Maggie Thatcher's heirs. In a dangerous precedent, on this issue too the British were allowed to opt out.

This European summit was true to form, with artificial suspense and dramatic confrontations well into the night. But like its predecessors, it ended in compromise because big business, which has inspired the movement of European integration from its start in 1958, is well aware of the advantages of a large market for achieving economies of scale or a more efficient division of labor, and wants to crown the whole edifice with a financial structure.

If the virtues of a vast common market are so evident, why do the former members of the Soviet Union wreck their close economic ties by putting up tariff barriers and coining new currencies? The argument—repeated time and again by a Mikhail Gorbachev fighting desperately to preserve both the union and his own presidential post—seems obvious: After decades under Moscow's fist, the republics resent the very idea of central power. When the Communist Party collapsed, an instrument of coercion and cohesion went with it; so far, only nationalism has been able to fill the void. Ukrainians and Byelorussians reject the center, while Boris Yeltsin sees an opportunity to rid himself of a hated rival. The "Slav" republics unite on ethnic grounds (following Solzhenitsyn's prescription) and on economic ones, since the Muslim republics of Central Asia have a much lower living standard. With the prospect of privatization, the leaders of all republics want to preside over the distribution of wealth. Last but not least, many seem to act as if the present chaos breaking up the union could not make things any worse. That is where they are mistaken.

Both meetings must be viewed as episodes in unfolding crises. The nature of the E.C. has been changing. Some of the prerogatives ceded by individual nation-states have not been taken over by a central authority in Brussels, and the European Parliament in Strasbourg is no more than a talk shop. These developments have contributed to the process of deregulation and of the Americanization of Europe. Neither the modest Social Charter adopted in Maastricht nor a central bank with a German accent will reverse this trend and eliminate the E.C.'s bias in favor of big business. Meanwhile, the rise of unemployment and the spread of uncertainty about the future in a changing Europe have led to the revival of right-wing populism and of xenophobic movements like the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France. The disease is actually spreading, although it will probably not reach epidemic proportions as long as the economic climate is not catastrophic. For now, it is not.

Things are different beyond the Elbe. There drastic deregulation is combined with the advent of capitalism. If the Polish medicine is now applied to the countries that hitherto formed the Soviet Union, the consequences will be disastrous. In any case, an iron fist will be required to suppress the popular unrest caused by the spread of poverty and unemployment. Will the present republican leaders, and Yeltsin in particular, establish their own dictatorial rule, or will they be swept aside by more jingoistic newcomers or by some Bonaparte waiting in the wings?

Europe is in danger. In the abstract, what is now needed is a development of democracy, a more active participation of the people in running their own affairs. In more concrete terms, this is not quite enough. With socialism discredited through guilt by association and the nationalist ghost now occupying the European stage, populist movements may well be led astray. What is badly needed in both halves of Europe is a rapid elaboration of progressive alternatives to capitalist rule. In the West, the situation is urgent. In the East, it is dramatic.

DANIEL SINGER

The Right at Work

Not all nominees are equal in the eyes of the Bush Administration. One who should know is Mary Miller Cracraft, whose treatment by the White House was distinctly different from that of, say, Clarence Thomas or even lesser-knowns like Carol Iannone. Bush submitted Cracraft's name for a second term on the National Labor Relations Board in late July after months of

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dickering—and left her twisting slowly, slowly while one far-right, single-issue interest group, the National Right to Work Committee, took potshots at her until she went down. The handling of Cracraft distressed not just organized labor, which likes her well enough, but key Republican business constituencies like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

Cracraft, a 1986 Reagan appointee to one of the unofficially Democratic slots on the N.L.R.B., received unanimous Senate confirmation on her first go-round. Coming from a management-side labor law firm in Kansas City, she had help from Missouri's Republican Senators, John Danforth, for whom she once interned, and Kit Bond.

During her five-year term, she earned a reputation for fairness. After considering other candidates, the White House took the advice of the business community as well as Bond and Danforth and sent her name to the Senate. The Labor and Human Resources Committee approved her unanimously and sent her name to the floor.

Cracraft would have sailed through had a vote been taken as scheduled. But the Right to Work Committee—whose name belies its virulently anti-union stance—had been working on the few senators who will listen to them. Cracraft, it said, was a union shill; Charlton Heston, former president of the Screen Actors Guild, made a trip to the Hill to emphasize its point. Senator Malcolm Wallop, who chairs the Senate Steering Committee, an ad hoc group of conservatives who generally share R.T.W.'s interests, asked for a hold on the vote. Senators flew the coop for August recess and Cracraft's nomination lapsed.

Cracraft has been a target of R.T.W. ever since a 1988 Supreme Court case, *Beck v. Communications Workers of America*. The Court's decision, a major victory for R.T.W., limits the types of activities that unions can include in the fees they charge objecting nonmembers whom they represent in union workplaces. Cracraft and two other board members, when asked for their views on current law by the Justice Department before it submitted the government's brief to the Court, said the law didn't appear to require such limitations—the position the government adopted.

Right to Work has been trying to expand on *Beck* ever since, with some success. The Steering Committee—particularly Wallop—is on R.T.W.'s wavelength. So is the committee's executive director, Jade West, who worked at R.T.W. years ago and whose husband is Raymond LaJeunesse Jr., an R.T.W. attorney who has argued some of the group's highest-profile cases. But a number of business groups take a broader view. After Cracraft's nomination lapsed, they pressed the White House to send her name back to the Hill. The Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and a wide range of corporate executives contacted the Administration. But the White House told Cracraft and her allies that they had to work out the block in the Senate themselves before she would be renominated.

Cracraft called and wrote to West, offering to meet with her and any members of the Steering Committee; she even camped out in Wallop's office one day, to no avail. R.T.W. meanwhile mailed screeds to its members, calling Cracraft a "union lackey" and "union boss stooge"—although in fact she had sided with management in more than 40 percent of her votes.

Against what would seem to be all odds, R.T.W. prevailed. In mid-November, the White House backed off. Why didn't the Administration stand behind its nominee? Cracraft is a Democrat and sits on an agency Bush cares little about. And no doubt the Administration surveyed the surrounding terrain as well: With the economy going down the drain and the bad taste from the Thomas nomination and the off-year election results still lingering, Bush operatives may be moving tentatively even on safe bets and leaning to placate conservatives.

Now that Cracraft is history, others are bucking for the job. One name frequently mentioned is Pamela Talkin, another Democrat, whom Bush almost picked last spring. Talkin is a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority and worked for the N.L.R.B. for more than a decade. In between those jobs, however, she was chief of staff to Clarence Thomas at the E.E.O.C., and she testified for him at his Senate confirmation hearing, round one. For Talkin, an N.L.R.B. appointment would beat a thank-you note from Bush. Right to Work, which has blocked three board nominations in the past few years, might give her a pass—it, too, worked on behalf of Thomas's nomination.

Labor and business say the real tragedy of the drawn-out tussle is that the board is down to four members, an uncomfortable reminder of recent years when the panel was perpetually short-handed and delays in issuing decisions became scandalous. The backlog, which had been shrinking, will build up again while the White House looks for someone who will survive the discriminating dissection of the National Right to Work Committee. VIVECA NOVAK

Viveca Novak is senior writer at Common Cause *magazine.*

★

TWO POEMS (FOR THE PRICE OF ONE) ON SUNUNU'S REPLACEMENT

AESTHETICALLY

It isn't clear this Skinner is a winner,
But he's thinner.

INTELLECTUALLY

Republicans portray him as the party's whiz:
Not dumb enough to brag about how smart he is.

Calvin Trillin

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Damascus

"In 1947," one senior Palestinian once said to me, "the Israelis had Chaim Weizmann and we had the Grand Mufti. No contest. But now the Israelis have Yitzhak Shamir. And *we* have . . . " He left the thought decently incomplete. It will be remembered of Yasir Arafat that he had neither the courage of a revolutionary nor the cunning of a hard-bargaining compromiser. Those who desire to compromise are making their way to Washington without him, or are invoking him as a totem, while those who think of Palestine as a question of outraged dignity are still, in spite of innumerable defeats, holding to their point.

I met Dr. George Habash in a downtown villa here, in a room fitted out with souvenirs of Jerusalem and embellished with a large portrait of Lenin. He himself, who was once the holy terror of the region, shows signs of dilapidation and walks with the limits of a stroke victim. Yet he remains intensely lucid and, with his many sympathizers, is quite certain that the current "peace process" can lead nowhere.

The apparent disagreement between the United States and Israel is, in his opinion, deceptive. "Bush and Shamir agree on the major points. No to the P.L.O. No to Palestinian statehood. No to self-determination. No to our right to return. America may say land for peace, and Shamir may say peace for peace, but the very best result can only be a small piece of land for a Jordanian confederation. And you can only have a confederation between equal partners. The price will be the surrender of 90 percent to Israel, and our acceptance of it. Our acceptance is *impossible*."

When he says "our," you get the impression that Habash is speaking for more than the cohorts of his own Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He insists that Bush and Baker, "who destroyed a whole Arab country under the pretext of United Nations resolutions," now begin to honor Resolutions 181, 194, 242, 338 and others dealing with statehood, Jerusalem and the right of Palestinian refugees to return. This is the chance that he believes Arab and Palestinian negotiators have missed in their eagerness to please the world's only superpower.

But didn't he go to Jordan, for the first time since Black September in 1970, and offer total solidarity with Saddam Hussein? "Yes. But remember that on 2 August 1990 our magazine wrote against the invasion of Kuwait. If I am frank with you, our criticism was partly tactical. But everything changed with the U.S. invasion and now with the siege. When the siege is over, I will call on Saddam Hussein to have democracy in Iraq and self-determination for the Kurds."

Why wait until then? "All right, I visited Saddam just after the end of the war and told him that nothing would change until he brought in pluralist democracy and Kurdish self-determination." It isn't only Israelis who dislike quarreling in front of the *goyim*. Habash has perhaps typically reserved his most principled position for a private exchange.

"Arafat is under pressure from Saudi Arabia, from the United States and Europe. He is very pragmatic—more pragmatic than necessary. He says he sees no alternative, and that nothing will force us to sign. But the more he enters, the more he cannot disengage." I asked if he did not think the Palestinians had gained morally from the graceful performance of their delegates. "I know Dr. Abdel-Shafi of Gaza very well. We met recently in Amman and I asked him to convince me that this process was a step on the road to a homeland. He said that to be honest, the Palestinian participation had only been useful for informing world opinion."

Well, speaking of world opinion, what about the portrait of Lenin on the wall? "Look, our Marxism-Leninism was never like that of the classical Communists, who took an umbrella in Ramallah when it was raining in Moscow. The U.S.S.R. used to call for the protection of Israel when we were first calling for a democratic secular state. So we are not as shaken as some people by the events in the Eastern bloc. When we first adopted Marxism-Leninism, we did so as a method and not a dogma."

Then what about relations with "militant" Arab governments? Had Habash read Jimmy Carter's statement that he had never met an Arab leader who privately favored a Palestinian state? "Yes, I read that, but I don't think it's entirely true. I am sure that Algeria favors a Palestinian state. And also Yemen. Jordan doesn't. Syria is not decided. You could say that perhaps the *effective* Arab states do not want one."

Much of Habash's conversation is like this: an alternation between the hard line and the quixotic (or between the attentive and the ill-informed; when I asked about Ahmed Jabril and his venomous anti-P.L.O. splinter group, the good doctor later replied that he had no information but believed that Jabril had connections with state systems like Iran). The quixotry came out when I inquired whether he had any message for Jews and Israelis who supported Palestinian rights but feared Palestinian irredentism. "I have a great hope that we can live together in peace. Why do they not accept one democratic Palestine? Why always quarrel over Jerusalem? With partition we will always have border disputes. But if they grant us a state and the right of return, we can still have peace for the foreseeable future."

"Foreseeable," of course, is just what Shamir seizes upon. But since nothing but an indistinct "autonomy" is even being proposed—and that in exchange for some very exacting concessions—it is a mistake to fetishize the charming new civilian "moderates" and to overlook the aspirations of the old fighters like Habash. To meet him, and the considerable number of Palestinian intellectuals who still hold their regard for him, is to recognize that a vast distance toward compromise on the Palestinian side has already been traveled. The present negotiations involve only the West Bankers and Gazans, and quite overlook the diaspora and the descendants of 1947 and 1948 (don't get Habash going on what happened to his family in Lydda in that period). But is there any sign that Palestinian "moderation" is being understood, let alone requited? Apparently left behind by history, Habash doesn't expect to be proved wrong when he says that all this will come to naught.

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ARTICLES.

TURF WARS IN WILLIAMSBURG

My Neighbor, My Enemy

ELIZABETH KADETSKY

Julia Vázquez drums her feet against the floor to describe the sound of the rumble she heard outside her window before she saw the mob: "*Zapatos, zapatos, zapatos.*" It was 1:30 in the morning and her 19-year-old son hadn't come home, so she ran out to the crowd of 300 or 400 men in dark overcoats and hats—Hasidic Jews—to see if her boy was the victim at its center. It wasn't her son but two young Central Americans screaming, "*Mami, Mami, ayúdanos.*" *Help us.* For Vázquez, a Puerto Rican who has lived in the Hasidic enclave in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, since it was a mixed neighborhood in the 1950s, it no longer mattered who they were. She lunged toward the boys and quickly found herself on the ground, fists beating into her back and black shoes slicing into her legs. When police arrived they arrested the Central Americans—muggers—while Vázquez retreated to her brownstone to examine the bruises running down her thigh. "*Mami,*" her son told her when he returned, "you can't get involved in this revolution. Because if you get involved, I'm going to jump in, too. And they'll kill me."

"They robbed a woman, fine," says Vázquez, who, along with many Latinos in greater Williamsburg, is suppressing a bitter rage over a dozen such attacks on Latino and African-American alleged criminals in the past five years. "But that doesn't mean they have to beat them to death."

Williamsburg's spontaneous Hasidic mobs and their more official counterpart, the government-funded Shomrim anti-crime patrol, are notorious in the minority communities surrounding the twenty-five-square-block Hasidic enclave. They deter criminals: In a city where police protection has dropped 14 percent since 1975 and where crime has jumped 25 percent, crime in Hasidic Williamsburg has steadily declined since the Shomrim began patrolling the midnight streets in 1976. The patrol now consists of a dispatcher, who works out of a 3- by 5-foot cubicle in the tire shop he simultaneously operates, and a staff of thirty-five to forty volunteers who carry walkie-talkies and patrol in their own cars. They do not work in shifts; whether asleep or at their jobs, they are always on call.

Residents in the neighboring Southside, a Latino and African-American district roughly equal in size to the 40,000-person Hasidic enclave, rarely venture over to the Hasidic side. Few can forget Frederick Pinckney, an alleged mugger who lost the use of his legs as a result of a 1989 beating by a Hasidic mob. And they fear the Shomrim, whose random harassment of African-Americans and Latinos is so widespread that almost every person of color in Williamsburg knows someone whom the patrol has followed, questioned or detained. An assistant district attorney in Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes's office describes the Shomrim's persecution of minorities, and the mobs' tendency to beat up even genuine criminals, as a "major problem."

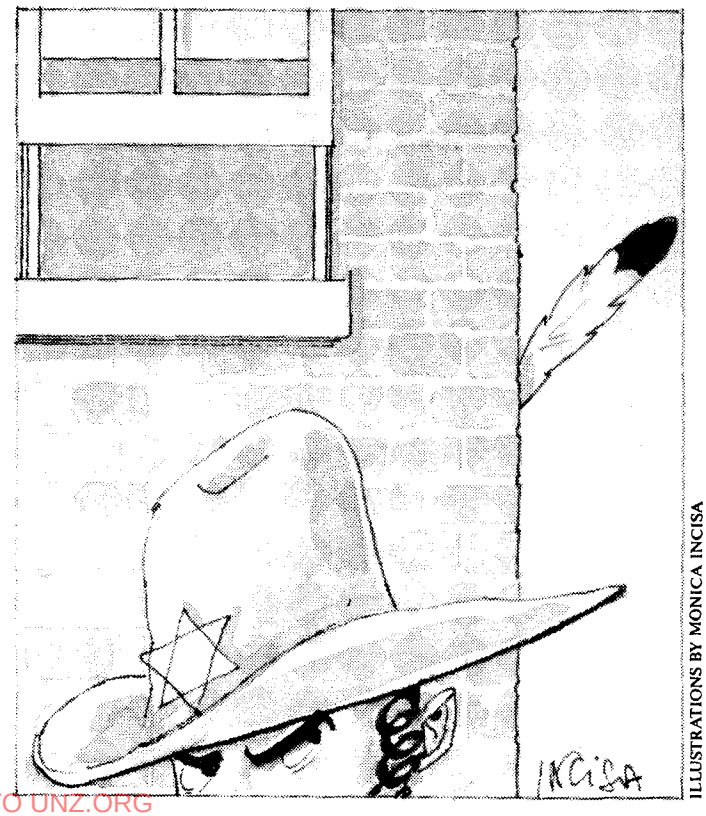
"We know there aren't too many of these people over here," says a Hasidic man, whom I shall call Jacob, referring to blacks and Latinos. "Somebody calls, one of them's creeping around, we kill him first and then ask if that was the guy, because they should never have been in the neighborhood in the first place."

As if everyone of color could stay away. These blocks of well-preserved tenements, many with baby carriages chained to their stoops, house mostly Jewish immigrants from Europe and their descendants. But 15 percent of the enclave's residents are nonwhite people like Vázquez, holdovers from the 1950s, before urban renewal pushed out most minorities.

"It's real simple," says David Santiago, director of the South Side Political Action Committee. "We live there, we have to take trains and go to work, and we have to go to the supermarkets. And we have to be on guard that momentarily a mob might come and attack us."

The mob violence and Shomrim vigilantism are only one element contributing to an atmosphere of simmering anger in Williamsburg. Tension is so palpable that a Hasidic and a Latino driver will sit locked in an intersection, blocking traffic for fifteen minutes because neither will cede the right of way to the other. In both communities there is one common prediction, bolstered when young men such as Vázquez's son threaten to "jump in": "It's going to be another Crown Heights."

The similarities between Williamsburg and the nearby



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MONICA INCISA

Elizabeth Kadetsky is a writer living in New York.

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Brooklyn neighborhood where a traffic accident this past August touched off anti-Jewish rioting are clear. Competition for scarce resources—housing, police protection, health services—has pitted Hasidic Williamsburg and Latino Williamsburg against each other. As in Crown Heights, these are two communities whose members feel the exclusion bred by racism. Poverty is widespread on both sides: The 1980 census found that white residents earned slightly less than the nonwhite average of $12,300.

And as in Crown Heights, there is an imbalance of power. A combination of prejudice in city agencies and the Hasidic community's unparalleled unity and ability to deliver a bloc vote has enabled the Hasidim to wield tremendous political power in the local arena and to garner a disproportionate percentage of local services. Politicians woo the Hasidic bloc by paying regular visits to the Satmarer Rebbe, the spiritual head of Williamsburg's predominant Hasidic sect. Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, whom Hasidic leaders vigorously support, goes so far as to sponsor $5,000-to-$10,000-a-year state grants to the Shomrim patrol even though he knows of the complaints against it. The extent of official bias was illustrated in a successful lawsuit Brooklyn Legal Services filed on behalf of Latino plaintiffs in 1976, aspects of which were refiled in 1989. The lawsuit documented how city agencies performed bureaucratic gymnastics in their search for Hasidim to rent apartments in public housing projects, meanwhile refusing minority applicants.

The Holocaust devastated the Satmar Hasidim, compounding the community's xenophobia.

If the Hasidim benefit from their internal cohesion and the resulting favoritism, the nonwhite communities suffer from a lack of it. Like Crown Heights, nonwhite Williamsburg is an ethnic jumble, never a strong foundation for political unification. There are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Mexicans and a small minority of African-Americans. As Jacob says of Hasidic political unity, "We as a community are a model of how communities are supposed to be. If the blacks or the Puerto Ricans had the power they wouldn't hate us so much for having the power ourselves."

A student in technical college, Antonio Caraballo, freed his Puerto Rican–born father from a Shomrim squad that falsely accused him of mugging a teenage girl. "Sometimes I even blame my people," the younger Caraballo says. "I look up to the Hasidics, and at the same time I resent them, because we don't have this kind of power."

Rebecca (not her real name) can't say why she did it, but, sleeping in her mother's apartment for the Shabbos, she got up to check her children. "I saw a tall, thin black man in the room and we both just stared for a second; it takes a second." Rebecca has always lived in Williamsburg, and she'd long heard reports of robbers preying on Hasidic households for silver candelabra and cash. The burglar fled at the sight of her, but Rebecca believes the Shomrim caught her thief on another occasion when its members—accompanied by a spontaneous throng of 300 or 400 men from the community—chased and turned over to the police a lanky African-American accused of robbing dozens of Hasidic homes.

"Oy," her sister, whom I'll call Freidy, adds over a meal of jellied salmon and beef tongue. "It was something. It gets panicky. They chased him, and they caught him." The mob ran four blocks, growing larger as men from homes along the way sprang out of bed and onto the street. "Everybody was angry because they knew he was robbing the neighborhood for weeks, and the fellow gets afraid. This is, you have a mob chasing you. You don't care if you don't even have bread to eat. You're not going to find yourself in this neighborhood again."

If the Shomrim and the Hasidic mobs function as gatekeepers of the Jewish district, there is precedent for it. The theme of separation runs through the history of the Satmar Hasidim. They are unlike the Lubavitcher Hasidim, who dominate Crown Heights and who have fierce ideological clashes with the Satmarers. Where Lubavitchers hand out menorahs and proselytize for converts, Satmarers prefer not to mingle even with observant, non-Hasidic Jews. Many Satmarers will point out matter-of-factly, as Freidy does, that "we don't have gates or fences up; anyone could come into the neighborhood." Shomrim is Hebrew for "guardian," which is only fitting in a society so isolated from the outside world that many young people grow up speaking only Yiddish, and the leadership bans newspapers, televisions and secular education to discourage assimilation.

Although the Hasidim reach back in history almost 300 years, the ultrareligious, insular temperament of the Satmarers can be traced to the Jewish Enlightenment of the late nineteenth century. Rooted in the Transylvanian mountain town of Satu Mare, Satmarers reacted with disdain and fear to the encroaching movement for Jewish assimilation in nearby Western Europe. As Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman point out in an essay in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, their response was to immerse themselves in religious practice and to enforce a strict separation from the modern world.

The Holocaust devastated the Satmar Hasidim, compounding the community's xenophobia. Most Satmar Hasidim went to Auschwitz when Hitler sentenced Hungarian Jews in 1944, and those who survived followed their spiritual leader, the Grand Rebbe, to Brooklyn in 1945. Now, every Satmar Hasid in Williamsburg is a concentration camp survivor or a descendant of one. A psychologist at New York University who studies psychological disorders among the Satmar maintains that every member of the Williamsburg sect suffers from Post-Holocaust Stress Syndrome. Indeed, the Holocaust is a subtext to almost every conversation in this enclave.

"It's because of the Holocaust," a man with thick blond sidecurls pronounces to a table of seven men at Green's Kosher Williamsburg Restaurant. They are young, and at one point or another each has worked for the Shomrim, which

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they describe as an official organization that, as well as fighting crime, actually controls the violent mobs. Their *peyes* bob in emphatic gestures as they discuss over gefilte fish and tuna salad how three criminals the Shomrim just detained got away. The robbers had followed a Hasidic diamond merchant from the 47th Street diamond district in Manhattan. The merchant pulled up in front of Green's shortly after calling the Shomrim on his car phone, and the would-be thieves approached him with a weapon. The Shomrim intervened, and police arrived minutes later. Apparently, the victim was too fearful to press charges. "He didn't want to be involved," one man says, relating the victim's fright to the Holocaust. "It's the most stupid thing."

As if such fear weren't enough of an obstacle, police, the men lament, don't respect the Shomrim. "The cop came out," another man says of the scene outside the deli. "He says, 'You have no right to hold this car.' All kinds of questions. He's screaming at the Shomrim."

What they say is technically true. Police at Williamsburg's 90th Precinct do not recognize the Shomrim, and many minority officers resent them. But until 1989, police brass welcomed the patrol's aid in anticrime operations and often awarded its members citations, while officers would pay personal visits to its members and their families. In April 1989, all that changed. Police revoked the Shomrim's sanction to operate as a civilian patrol—much as the Guardian Angels do—when the group refused to submit a membership roster. Shomrim spokesmen attribute the split to their frustration that police would not station more officers in the enclave. But both versions ignore the fact that the schism followed the Pinckney beating by only three months. "They'd gone too far," one sergeant admits. "Nine times out of ten a minority goes through the neighborhood, they'll follow him. They overstep their bounds."

That's the official story, but the unofficial one suggests there is a tacit bond between police and the Shomrim. The existence of this bond was ironically illustrated late one night last winter when the patrol assailed an off-duty police officer, an African-American and a native of Williamsburg who was the object of a frenzied car chase. He led his pursuers, Shomrim members in a black Jeep with lights and sirens, to the Williamsburg station house, where he tried to arrest them. His superiors had other ideas. "They wanted to read me my Miranda," he tells me. "An officer called me in and asked me what I was doing in 'Jewtown' that time in the morning."

If police tolerate the patrol's racism, they close their eyes completely to the mob violence. Someone who commits a crime might have too much on his mind to press charges against a mob that attacked him. But even those—innocent or guilty—who want their attackers prosecuted come up against what some cops angrily charge is an unwritten policy to keep hands off the Hasidim.

Frank Budd's story, referred to in a notice of claim filed against the city, brings that unspoken policy into clear focus. Budd, a Trinidadian from neighboring Bedford Stuyvesant, alleges that in December 1990, 150 or 200 men chased him four blocks and assaulted him; they accused him of running over a child with his car. Budd says police watched while he was being beaten, then detained him, posting a guard outside his hospital room until they discovered Budd was innocent. Then they acknowledged their mistake but refused to press charges against the members of the mob, saying it was too late to identify anyone.

According to the precinct's division inspector, Emanuel Neuwirth, "The problem is, people can't identify the perpetrator because they'll say all Jews look the same." But his explanation overlooks the possibility of arresting a person on the scene for any number of charges brought against rioters: disturbing the peace, vandalism, blocking sidewalks, inciting to riot or acting in concert.

Even the Satmar leadership denounces the mob violence, but that means little if police won't discipline the instigators. The failure to do so fuels Latinos' perception that public agencies favor the Hasidim. And that in turn inspires anger among the Hasidim, who say Latinos scapegoat them for the crime and poverty in their own community, that Latino kids taunt and harass them, and that Latino leaders thwart Hasidic expansion into greater Williamsburg, necessitated by the community's extraordinary birthrate of 8.7 children per family.

So it may be no surprise that when I ask leaders on both sides what can be done to prevent another Crown Heights, they all point to government. Just as in Crown Heights, the pressures of poverty and the lack of public services in Williamsburg create the context in which two communities take their anger out on each other. And the public agencies that should create options for peace only contribute to the tension by denying the neighborhood the resources it needs—in this case, primarily low-income housing.

David Niederman, a rising Hasidic leader who sounds an unprecedented tone of conciliation—he has condemned the mob violence—says, "I tell my people, it's not you against the Latinos. It's not the Latinos against you. There are very few resources here, and the administration doesn't understand."

Luis Gardén Acosta, a Latino leader and youth services worker whose office lies only a half-dozen blocks from Niederman's, echoes the Hasid almost literally. "People want to make this issue that we were born to hate the Hasidim and the Hasidim were born to hate us. That's not true. That people feel injustice, that is true." □

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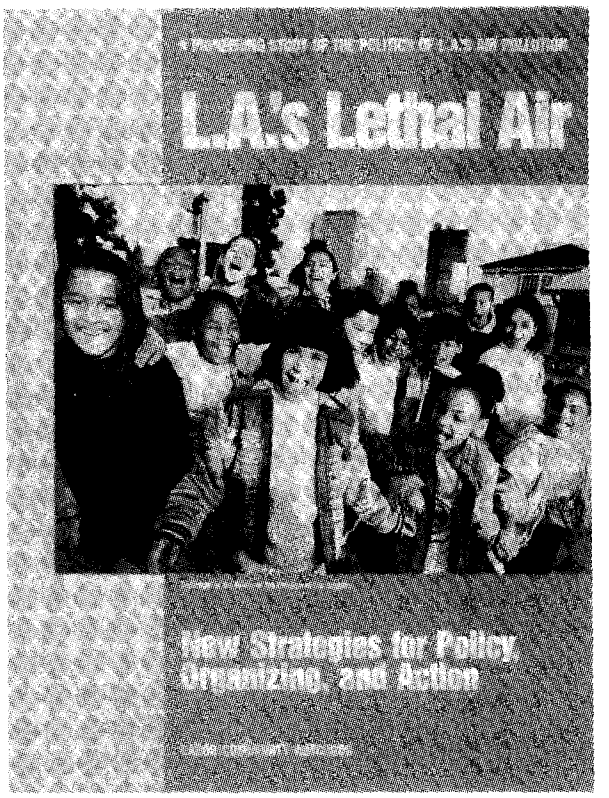

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ABDUCTION OF SHEIK AL-FASSI

Family Feud, Saudi Style

KNUT ROYCE

Mohammed al-Fassi is hard to like unless you compare him with some of his in-laws in the Saudi royal family. They are reportedly overseeing his torture in a Riyadh prison cell. To his wealthy American neighbors in the 1970s and 1980s, Mohammed was the sheik from hell, a demented millionaire who painted the genitalia on his front-yard statuary in Beverly Hills and converted a Miami mansion into a refuge for stray cats. Even his family and some associates on the payroll agree that Mohammed was an immature, spoiled brat. But more recently he has become concerned with religious and political affairs in his country.

During the Persian Gulf crisis he brought a planeload of powdered milk to Baghdad. He also called for reforms and democracy in Saudi Arabia. Those indiscretions have cost him his freedom. They may cost him his life. The Bush Administration is silent on the case. A little torture here and there is unfortunate but there are more pressing concerns, like cheap and bountiful oil and keeping the pressure on Saddam Hussein.

Members of the Saudi ruling clan have long feuded with al-Fassi and his branch of the family. During a 1984 federal trial in Virginia, witnesses testified that some in the Saudi royal family had hatched a plot a year earlier to assassinate Mohammed and perhaps other members of the al-Fassi family as well. A former State Department officer was convicted of conspiracy in the attempt to kill Mohammed on behalf of the members of the royal family.

The rivalry has reached a boiling point again. The al-Fassi branch and human rights organizations claim that Mohammed is being held without charges and is being tortured in Saudi Arabia. Al-Fassi family members also assert, with some circumstantial evidence, that two family employees—Mohammed's political adviser and a chauffeur—have been murdered by Saudi agents in the current vendetta.

According to eyewitness accounts, the most recent skulduggery began in late September in Alexandria, Egypt, where Mohammed had been living since leaving the United States in 1989. He and his entourage of eighty had gone to the airport for a chartered flight to Mexico. To the party's surprise, al-Fassi's political adviser, Hassan Khattab, announced that the flight had been canceled and that he had arranged for another aircraft to take them to Amman, Jordan, where a second chartered plane would whisk them to Mexico. On October 2, after several airlines had declined to provide a plane for the trip to Mexico, more than 100 Jordanian security agents stormed the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman and arrested Mohammed. He was immediately deported to Saudi Arabia. The al-Fassi family believes that Khattab had been enlisted by Saudi agents to set up Mohammed's arrest.

A week later Amnesty International warned that the 37-year-old sheik was "at risk of being tortured and also at risk of execution" for his criticism of the kingdom during the gulf crisis. Saudi Arabia has yet to acknowledge that it has him in custody, let alone that it is torturing him. The Saudi Embassy in Washington says it knows nothing of al-Fassi's plight. A spokesperson at the Jordanian Embassy did not respond to several requests for interviews on why Mohammed was arrested. Without elaborating, a Bush Administration official confirmed that Mohammed is imprisoned in Saudi Arabia.

The State Department claims it does not have sufficient evidence to approach the Saudis with a request that they not torture the sheik. It is not likely to get such evidence. In its 1990 report on human rights, the department noted that there were "credible reports of torture and mistreatment of detainees, particularly political detainees," in Saudi Arabia. However, the report continued, "as in past years government officials declined to respond to inquiries regarding specific reports of torture."

Al-Fassi family members and associates say the subsequent deaths of Khattab and Eric Herzfeld, a family chauffeur, are related to the feud. They claim that a fatal overdose of heroin was administered by Saudi agents to Khattab in Cairo in order to silence him. And they point out that Herzfeld's slaying in Miami is reminiscent of the 1983 plot, when conspirators planned to stop a car transporting Mohammed and shoot him. They say hired thugs stopped a car in Miami but mistook the chauffeur for al-Fassi's brother, Tarik, a student at the University of Miami.

Cairo police report that Khattab died of a self-administered heroin overdose, though the al-Fassi family maintains he was not a drug user. And Miami detectives believe robbery was the motive in the October 13 fatal bludgeoning of the chauffeur, but the case is still under investigation.

The feud has its roots in the marriage fifteen years ago of Prince Turki bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, one of the seven full brothers of the ruling family, to al-Fassi's sister, Hend al-Fassi, despite pleas from his brothers to wed within the acceptable Saudi clans. Although the al-Fassi family claims Saudi Arabia is its ancestral home and that it belongs to the same tribe as King Hussein of Jordan, the current members are considered interlopers, only returning to their native land earlier this century after moving to Morocco about 500 years ago.

Questions about al-Fassi's activities obviously rankle the royal family. Asked about him, Nancy Dutton, a Washington lawyer representing the kingdom, quoted Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan: "Every family has a couple of bad apples. This is one of ours." The only official indication of why Mohammed is under arrest comes from the American Red Cross, which wrote his family in October that al-Fassi had been charged with unspecified "crimes committed against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

A Bush Administration source who monitors events in Saudi Arabia said the "crimes" were Mohammed's visit to Saddam Hussein during the gulf crisis, when he brought the powdered milk, and his radio appeal from Baghdad to the Arab nations aligned against Iraq to settle the crisis without

Knut Royce is a reporter in Newsday*'s Washington bureau.*

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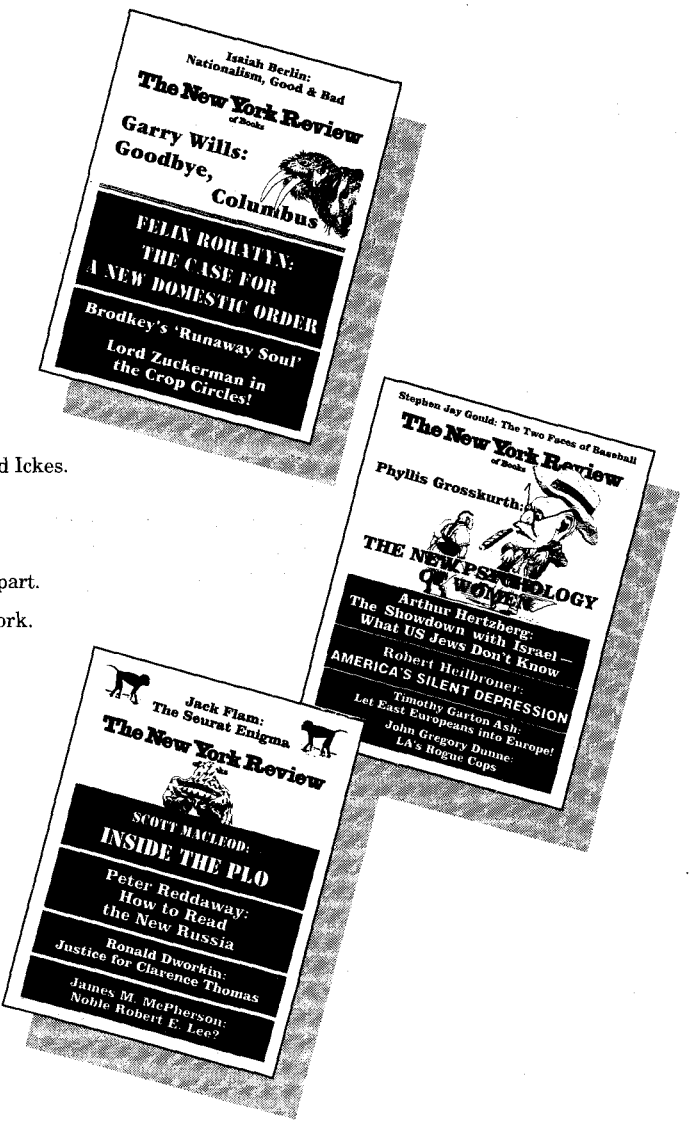
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bloodshed. But more troublesome to the Saudis, this Administration source said, were Mohammed's public statements urging democracy and other reforms in the kingdom.

In an "urgent appeal," Amnesty International said it was "gravely concerned at the apparent unacknowledged detention" of Mohammed by Saudi Arabia. The group also sought "clarification from the Jordanian authorities as to the reasons for their apparent summary expulsion" of Mohammed to Saudi Arabia.

The family claims to have taped telephone conversations with al-Fassi in his prison cell. A senior member of the clan said his cell is so small that he "can't [stretch] his legs in front of him. His knees are up to his chin. . . . He is kept by handcuffs; his legs the same thing. They put a big metal chain on him and a big ball. . . . They beat him on his skull, tried to take one of his eyes out."

A one-minute segment of a tape was provided to me by the family. I brought it to a translator, who said the words are unintelligible. A man said to be al-Fassi is screaming. □

INTELLECTUAL PURGE

'Wrapping Up' East Germany

PETER MARCUSE

Socialism in East Germany was not defeated by capitalism; the system—which had some elements of socialism in it—was overthrown by the people of East Germany. As it was being broken up, an opening briefly appeared for the consideration of a "third way," something neither capitalist nor Stalinist but combining the formal freedoms and market advantages of the first with the equality and stated social goals of the second. With unification and the complete domination of events in East Germany by the West, those possibilities have, for the moment, been suppressed. The termination of the pre-existing rights of every professor in every institution of higher education in East Germany, and the layoff of thousands of researchers in the academies, are a significant part of that process of suppression. While de-Stalinization is certainly needed, the course of the *Abwicklung* ("wrapping up"), the official euphemism for the dissolution of university departments and institutions, is making it crystal clear that the goal of the German authorities is the simple integration of East into West without reflection. The effort to find alternatives to capitalism and Stalinism is to be buried before it is fully born.

Most of the early leaders of the *Wende* (literally, the "turn") in East Germany were committed to socialism as an ideal. They saw de-Stalinization, the overthrow of the centralized, overplanned, despotic system of the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.), as a step toward a better, more democratic socialism, not a repudiation of it. But the general dissatisfaction with the existing system was too great to permit that kind of reform. Twenty years earlier, at the time of the Prague Spring, it might have been possible to have thoroughgoing reform from within the system, especially in East Germany, where things were going pretty well economically. Even in 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev initiated *perestroika* in the U.S.S.R., it might also have been possible in East Germany. But Erich Honecker's remark—that just because one's neighbor puts up new wallpaper doesn't mean one's own walls need redoing—ended that possibility. By 1989, the people of East Germany wanted out.

Intellectuals played a leading role in the G.D.R. reform movement in the early days: Writers, artists, theologians and professors spoke, wrote, marched, founded citizens' groups and planned strategies. The biggest single rally against the domination of the Socialist Unity Party, when close to a million people gathered at Alexanderplatz in East Berlin on November 4, 1989, was sponsored by the Union of Creative Artists. Its slogans were hardly pro-capitalist: "No Power for Anyone!"; "Against Monopoly Socialism, for Democratic Socialism!"; "Revolutions Are Festivals for the People!"; "Privileges for All!"; "Skepticism Is a Citizen's Highest Duty!" Not a word about free markets or unification with the West.

Universities were hothouses of reform. During my sabbatical in the G.D.R., from August 1989 to July 1990, I had occasion to walk through many university corridors; they were inevitably plastered with leaflets, denunciations, proposals, slogans, declarations. An independent nationwide student organization was formed, and the official Free German Youth lost almost all influence. New governing councils were elected and new presidents of universities chosen. Committees, generally with equal representation of senior faculty, junior faculty, students and staff, were set up to revise curriculums and review personnel decisions. Departments of Marxism-Leninism were closed; many professors who owed their jobs more to party loyalty than to scholarly competence lost their jobs. In academia, party membership became a liability rather than an asset.

In research institutions a similar pattern developed. The G.D.R. had never sent dissidents to gulags and rarely to jail; the most typical treatment of nonconformist intellectuals was to keep them on the payroll of some institution but to prevent them from publishing, teaching, giving lectures or otherwise infecting the public arena. Those thus treated in the past were rehabilitated, and hard-liners lost positions of power. Contacts with the West, strictly limited before, were taken up with enthusiasm. Research projects started exploring areas hitherto off-bounds, from living conditions in the massive new prefabricated housing developments to theories of cultural communication to alternative forms of social market economics.

The Contract of Unification between East and West Germany, effective October 3, 1990, threw these reform efforts into disarray. The existing employment rights of all those working for the state or any of its institutions (and they were

Peter Marcuse, professor of urban planning at Columbia University, spent 1989-90 in East Germany on a Fulbright fellowship.

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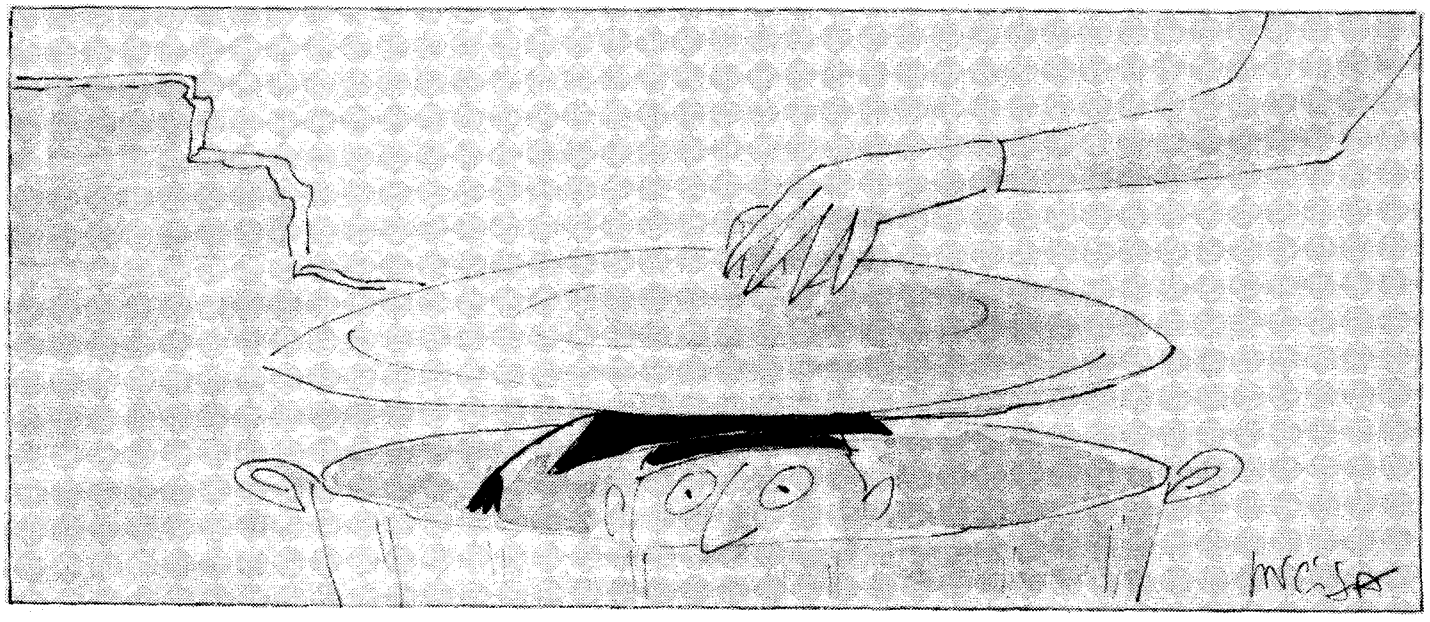
many and large in the G.D.R.) were abrogated; the Länder, or states, were given the option of continuing them or not. If states decided on *Abwicklung* before December 31, 1990, they could terminate without further ado. If they waited beyond that date certain protections went into effect—more notice given, for instance—but discharges were just as possible. Provisions for a "waiting list" status, which included 70 percent of pay for six months (nine months for older workers), unemployment benefits and job-creation slots of two years' duration, were adopted—West Germany is after all a prosperous welfare state—but the net effect was still the termination of jobs at the will of the Länder governments. Since those governments were in the hands of political parties dominated by their Western leaders, all final decisions as to the renewal of the intellectual establishment were put firmly into the hands of the conservative Christian Democrats and their allies.

The same pattern was followed with the Academy of Sciences and the other G.D.R. research institutions: The Contract of Unification provided for total dissolution (for the central Academy) or restructuring and change of personnel. The Western German Scientific Council, the central body for coordination of scientific work (including social as well as natural sciences), was charged with making structural recommendations for the abolition or consolidation of departments and institutions or their merger with Western ones, both for higher education and for research. The council set up working groups to visit all the G.D.R. institutions in the fall of 1990 and spring of 1991; some worked professionally according to established academic criteria, but others worked with arrogance and contempt for anything associated with the G.D.R.

The final recommendations of the council appeared this past July. They called for reduction of the academies by more than half, transfer of some of their functions and personnel to universities, and numerous closings and consolidations of departments at the universities themselves. A number of mergers of G.D.R. institutions into existing Western ones (and a handful of mergers in the opposite direction) were recommended. But the costs of unification have been far in excess of what Chancellor Helmut Kohl initially proclaimed, and there is a virtual fiscal crisis in Germany today. Thus the amount provided by the federal government, directly or through the Länder, for the "renewal" of the universities and research functions in the G.D.R. was less than half that thought necessary by the scientific council (which in turn was considered much too low by many in the East), and a committee of the scientific council itself took the unusual step of criticizing the amount allocated. As its chair, Professor Dieter Simon, pointed out, it was awkward to make the recommendation that researchers from the academies should be absorbed by universities when the universities themselves were given inadequate funds even to keep their own personnel.

The Länder now have responsibility for the implementation of those recommendations, but their fiscal capacity has already been exceeded by other demands. They are subject to a number of pressures, including the deeply felt popular resentment against the old party apparatus, the constant ideological attack on socialism as an idea, the pressure of unemployed or ambitious West German academics for open positions, and the largely justified criticisms of the overblown and inefficient educational and research establishment of the G.D.R. As a result, virtually every state has adopted the following measures: Close down completely any ideologically "tainted" department (from departments of Marxism-Leninism through socialist law and socialist economics to journalism and pedagogy). Pressure into early retirement anyone over 55. Terminate the contracts of all teaching and research assistants. Set up evaluation commissions, dominated by Westerners, to review professors' political positions first, and only afterward their academic competence. If they survive those two reviews, permit them to reapply for their old jobs. Let the decisions on hiring be made by new commissions, on which only those already (re)hired would have a voice, making them effectively Westerner-dominated. Keep the final say in the hands of the Länder ministries themselves.

Questionnaires have been distributed to all public employees, including academics and researchers, to facilitate these changes. Questions are asked about political party jobs; positions in any "mass organization," including the trade un-



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ions; academic and government appointments; elective offices held; permissions to travel out of the country, including to West Germany; prizes, titles or honors received; institutions that provided recommendations for getting the present position; personal privileges (for example in housing); participation in the disciplining or failing of any student for political reasons; and other matters. Anyone with recognized achievements in the old G.D.R. is thus suspect. "Objective" tests of professional competence are equally unreliable, but biased in the opposite direction. International contacts, frequent publication, even access to foreign literature were privileges of the few and generally a reward for party loyalty. Today, passing the review for past political purity likely means flunking the review for competence, and vice versa. With the termination of contracts of all personnel as the first step in the process, the presumption of innocence turns into one of guilt. Given the composition of the deciding bodies, both substantive fairness and procedural due process are in doubt.

The case of Michael Brie is emblematic. In the mid-1970s, he was a young philosopher, a convinced socialist, who went so far as to agree to provide the Security Police with information on Third World people he knew in the hope of directing support where it would be most effective in the national liberation movements that the G.D.R. supported. He was never accused of providing derogatory information on anyone, or of violating teacher-student relations. Consistently critical of the Communist Party's leadership, Brie worked at Berlin's Humboldt University on problems of developing democratic socialism. He had trouble getting published because of it, but he sent copies of his work to the Security Police, hoping that it would at least get read by higher-ups. He had the respect of his colleagues and was made full professor in the course of the *Wende*.

But he revealed his past association with the Security Police shortly thereafter and was dismissed from his position as a result. The reasons given by members of the West German–dominated commission that found him not qualified were that his field was social philosophy, which did not belong in a department of social sciences; that his research interests were too narrow; and that he had not changed his interests toward more empirical sociology since the *Wende*. This dismissal has just been reversed by the courts on procedural grounds, but those grounds can easily be rectified.

Protests against the "renewal" process have not been widespread. Under "reform" rector Heinrich Fink, Humboldt, the leading G.D.R. university, has instituted several lawsuits challenging dismissals and dissolutions; it has won on a few procedural issues, but in general the West German courts have ruled that the unification contract justifies what is being done. Students in Weimar and Leipzig protested and demonstrated—in Weimar 300 students organized a widely publicized bike-a-thon to Erfurt, the state capital, to present their case—but with little concrete result. The ambivalent relations of the West German left to the G.D.R., and other problems closer to home, mute involvement from this direction. The unions have not been aggressive in defense of East German rights. Only the Union of the Unemployed joined in the lawsuit Humboldt University brought against the *Abwicklung* in Berlin. In September the European Parliament, surprisingly enough, called on the government of Berlin to respect the rights of Humboldt; the presidents of two Paris universities apparently pressed for the action. A few U.S. organizations have protested mildly, but otherwise there has been silence. Where there has been outside support, it has been around issues of academic freedom and university independence, not around the more general issues of the suppression of alternative thinking, alternative possibilities, critical confrontations with the East/West German past.

The possibilities for such a third way, for a course that could have been implemented, should not be exaggerated. Capitalism's attractions had a great deal to do with the rejection of socialism in the G.D.R., and the socialist reform movement was never powerful. Supported by the overwhelming majority of the people in repudiating an ossified dictatorship and advocating free travel, free speech and free assembly, the early reformers did not have any mass following for continued, but democratic, state planning and state support of socialist ideals. Nor was the suppression of any such alternative the primary goal in the dismemberment of the East German system of higher education and research. In most cases, ideological colonization has been the result, rather than the deliberate intent, of the recent policies. But result it has nevertheless been.

The exploration of alternatives to Western-style capitalism is not likely to find shelter in any East German university or research institution in the foreseeable future—unless, of course, the situation outside the universities changes. Dissatisfaction with unification is growing. Chancellor Kohl is pelted with eggs and tomatoes when he appears in East German cities. Factories are closing, unemployment rates are topping 30 percent, kindergartens and health clinics are being shut down, free medical treatment is disappearing and savings are being used up. Even within the universities, the situation may change and activism may reappear. A controversy has just exploded around fragmentary accusations that Heinrich Fink had been a regular collaborator with the Security Police, accusations surfacing somehow just before the scheduled new elections for rector at Humboldt. More than 3,000 students jammed a meeting in support of him and his reform efforts, and a protest march blockaded downtown Berlin streets for hours. The elections have been postponed until the matter is put to rest.

Most feel the Christian Democrats would lose an election if one were held today. The Social Democrats offer no better alternative, and the Free Democrats would restrain "free market" forces even less than do the Christian Democrats. If the alternative of a reformed socialism could be creditably put on the agenda today, it might reopen questions the established parties consider forever closed. It's a big if, of course. But the people of eastern Germany have shown that they can learn from experience. And the intellectuals have shown that they can provide leadership, given the right circumstances. *Abwicklung* is among the policies helping to prevent those circumstances from coming about. □

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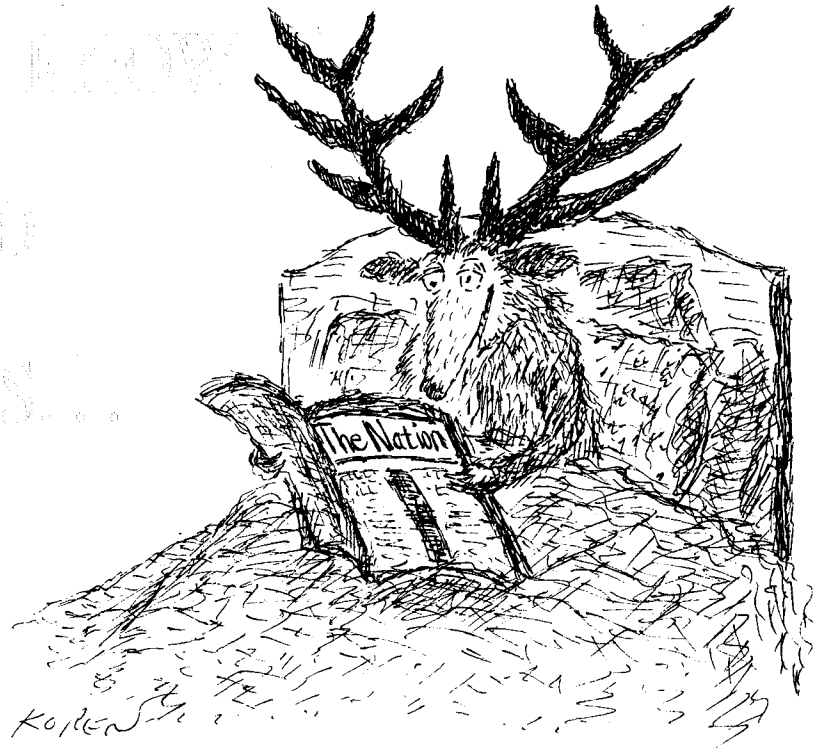

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Our Holiday Lists

ROANE CAREY

When I came of age in Alabama in the late sixties and early seventies, the shameless barbarism of Jim Crow was in full retreat and the left-liberal upsurge was at its height. Even so, the South remained deeply conservative, and the very idea of a radical tradition there has always seemed somewhat ludicrous. I was delighted, then, to discover Robin D.G. Kelley's *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (North Carolina, paper $12.95), a scrupulously researched account of the Communist Party's fortunes in a most inhospitable environment, where ordinances gave police wide authority to arrest and detain suspected radicals. The party identified blacks as a natural constituency, which meant that, in the land of segregation, they would be almost its only constituency. Kelley is good at showing how racism prevented any effective alliance between working-class blacks and whites. I was moved by the courage and determination of sharecroppers, workers and party organizers in the face of evictions, savage beatings and lynchings by vigilantes and police.

At a time when many Americans like to think those bad old days of racist oppression are over, Patricia J. Williams has written *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Harvard, $24.95), a brilliant dissection of a legal and social system that uses the language of liberal "objectivity" and race neutrality to perpetuate racial (and gender) exclusion. I like the way she discusses current events and personal experiences in the context of legal and critical theory, demonstrating how mired we still are in an order that defines blacks as alien and bad. African-Americans must embrace that system at least partially in order to survive, but the psychological damage sustained in doing so is immense. Williams, a law professor at the University of Wisconsin, relates her own difficulties in this context with unflinching candor.

Honesty and self-criticism are not traits one readily associates with those in the legal profession, so I was pleased to find a second book by a lawyer that exhibited such qualities. Thomas Geoghegan's *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $19.95) is a riveting account of the difficulties in being a labor lawyer in the Reagan-Bush era, when the government has declared war on unions and the working class. Geoghegan's book is so effective because he imparts a moral and emotional commitment to the cause of labor that's all too rare. He's also open about his own middle-class proclivities and corruptions, which saves the book from being too preachy or self-righteous. Unfortunately, Geoghegan has a smug, jokey tone that quickly becomes tiresome, but I can forgive that flaw because of all the other good qualities.

DAVID CORN

Because I'm working on a book, I've had to cut back on my reading, except for books on spies. (Mine is on a fellow who spent three decades in the C.I.A.) So let me warn you about Norman Mailer's overweight (1,310 pages) tome, *Harlot's Ghost* (Random House, $30). It is a gallant bellyflop. Billed as a "novel of the C.I.A.," it tracks one case officer through a decade of covert mucking about, blending real-life characters (that is, Mailer's version of them) with outright fictitious persons. Mailer tries too hard, and pushes his protagonist (and his few Agency friends) into the midst of almost every known C.I.A. misdeed of the 1950s and early 1960s. He tries to turn the C.I.A. into some all-too-neat metaphor for America and ends up, in his own way, romanticizing it.

To save money and prevent muscle strain, go to a used book store and pick up a yellowing copy of Philip Agee's *Inside the Company: C.I.A. Diary*. There's still no better account of life in the C.I.A. His anti-Agency agitprop is set aside until the very end, after a dispassionate and detailed description of his days as a Company man. As for spies-as-metaphors, nobody tops John Le Carré. He may be running out of material, but *The Secret Pilgrim* (Knopf, $21.95), a novel that is almost a collection of short stories, shows he has a reserve. His pronouncement on the cold war rings clear: The right people lost and the wrong people won. The best nonfiction trek into this territory in recent years is Tom Mangold's *Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton; The C.I.A.'s Master Spy Hunter* (Simon and Schuster, $24.95). Mangold, obviously with the assistance of Angleton's enemies and victims in the Agency, portrays the legendary counterintelligence poohbah as a brilliant paranoiac and shows the tragic consequences—sometimes in terms of lives lost—of Angleton's apparent addiction to the cold war. Off the spook beat, Tina Rosenberg's *Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America* (Morrow, $25) is recommended. Through a series of profiles—an honest judge in Medellín, Colombia; an Argentine Navy officer who "disappeared" hundreds of persons; a Shining Path recruit; and others—Rosenberg tries to discern what causes people to inflict violence and why so many watch silently. As one who witnessed a murder being planned in Colombia and did nothing, she should know.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Rock Hill, South Carolina, is neither a Florence, an Athens nor a Manhattan, but it has expressed its aspirations for itself through a complex of towering goddesses by Audrey Flack, which gets it three stars in anyone's aesthetic Michelin Guide. New Yorkers were able to get a glimpse of Flack's inspired vision in her *A Pantheon of Female Deities* at the Louis K. Meisel Gallery in New York last spring and summer. Her colossal goddesses radiate this artist's confidence that beauty might just save us all, and in an art world gone sour, nasty, bickering, jeering and cold, it lifts the spirits to remember her show, one of many I wish I'd had time and space to cover.

Ida Applebroog's portrayal of the human condition, at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, is as dark and saturnine as Flack's is bright and sanguine. Her Goyaesque images of moral squalor cast doubts on even the power of goddesses to lift us very high. Her powerful paintings are haunting and mean, in visceral and excremental hues, showing unspeakable men and women doing unspeakable things.

Beauty reasserts itself in Alain Kirili's lobby installation, *Commandment*, at the Brooklyn Museum (through January 5). It is composed of forged shapes that owe their distant provenance to the calligraphy of torahs, so it is a kind of sculptural writing, and the regimented forms imply an abstract sculpture.

Lee Savage exhibited his marvelously conceived portraits of artistic heroes at O.K. Harris in October. A few years ago he showed portraits all of Joyce, as witty,

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brooding and mysterious as their subject. He has widened his assembly of notables to include Rilke, Proust, James and others, painted with that degree of intimacy and certitude with which the painters of the Renaissance addressed the familiar and important.

Cleve Gray's paintings at Berry-Hill Galleries in October defined a cusp between abstraction and a kind of rarefied depiction. They could have been satisfying if only as gestural strokes sustained against a field of color, but they suggested profiles of heights emerging through mists, or embodied powers, as if dragons, vibrating in chartless spaces.

Abstraction made a certain return in two intense shows, one at the John Good Gallery, curated by Demetrio Paparoni, and the other at the Sidney Janis Gallery, entitled "Conceptual Abstraction." David Reed was in both, his marvelous baroque forms furling and unfurling like the draperies on a statue by Bernini, snapping in otherworldly winds. The placement of Sean Scully's piece, as if in its own space at John Good's, augmented its power by the shock of encountering it there, as fierce and elegant as a tiger.

I have acquired a certain enthusiasm for what is called Studio Furniture today, not least of all because of the great metaphors that chairs and tables insinuate when construed as art. Wendell Castle's *Angel Chairs* at the Peter Joseph Gallery doubtless pun on the form of the wing chair, but they afford the sense of being enfolded when one sits in them. A dash of needed irreverence at this season was to be found in Garry Knox Bennett's funky tables at the Franklin Parrasch Gallery: They look like three-dimensional realizations of abstract paintings.

Most of these shows are merely memories, but they were all wonderful to see. You can, however, still see the spirited drawings for her children's book, *Dancing Dogs*, by *New Yorker* artist Barbara Westman at Books & Co., 939 Madison Avenue. She happens to be my wife, but what's a little conflict of interest in this season of generosity and hope?

THOMAS M. DISCH

The holiday season was probably originally legislated as an antidote to the natural gloom one feels in one's cave at the winter solstice. For those who'd rather indulge a solstitial impulse of "Bah, Humbug!" than go caroling, I recommend two literary biographies of poets who led spectacularly awful lives. Tom Clark's *Charles Olson* is subtitled *The Allegory of a Poet's Life* (Norton, $27.95), and Olson indeed led a life in which the poet's every act seemed emblematic of the hollowness of fame and the atrocities that can be committed to attain it, the perpetrator all the while maintaining that special combination of sloth, arrogance and hermetic self-absorption that is the prerogative of poets in our time. It's doubtful that Tom Clark meant to write a muckraking biography, but the facts of Olson's life don't leave much room for a plea bargain.

For a female exemplar of the same syndrome, Richard Perceval Graves's biography of his uncle, *Robert Graves: The Years With Laura 1926–1940* (Viking, $24.95), is an even richer source of *Schadenfreude*. The poet Laura Riding, who was the fearful original of the Imperial harridans in the two Claudius novels, completely upstages Graves in his own biography. She is sublimely awful, almost in a literal sense, in that she often hinted at her own divinity. Lacking that, she declared herself to be the greatest poet of her age and to possess the secret wisdom that would prevent World War II. "Finality," as Riding styled herself, hung on until after she'd shared the Bollingen Prize with Donald Justice earlier this year. It is doubtful that her later half-century will ever be chronicled as zestfully as her fourteen years with Graves. A pity. Laura Riding may not have been the best poet of her age, but she was its zaniest professional "genius."

ELSA DIXLER

I read a lot of books for work. Here are some of the books I read for fun in 1991.

The three books I couldn't put down this year, alphabetized by author, were Kitty Kelley's *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography* (Simon and Schuster, $24.95), Diane Wood Middlebrook's *Anne Sexton* (Houghton Mifflin, $24.95) and Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife* (Putnam, $22.95). I have to admit that Kelley's was my favorite and that I firmly believe every word of it. In any event, it's the deepest book I've read about the Reagan Administration and the milieu from which it emerged. If I ever find myself teaching the history of the late twentieth century, I'll be sure to assign a chapter.

Middlebrook's book combines the pleasure of intelligent literary biography with that of voyeurism. But the continuing debate about whether Sexton's psy-

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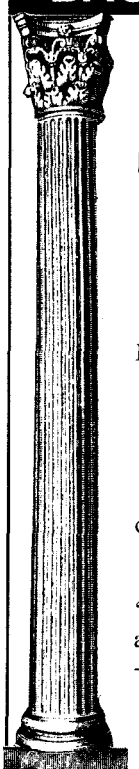

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BY CALVIN TRILLIN

Foreword by Charlayne Hunter-Gault

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chiatrist breached professional confidentiality by giving Middlebrook the tapes of their sessions surprises me. Much more shocking, I thought, was Middlebrook's story about how Sexton's subsequent psychiatrist had an affair with her—and charged her for their meetings.

Finally, I was totally caught up by the mother's story in Tan's novel. The book has all the limitations that you've read about in various reviews, but whenever I think about war—in Iraq or Yugoslavia—I find myself remembering this tale.

Other books I enjoyed this year include Thomas Geoghegan's *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (I can't recall another book about unions written in so engaging a voice); Melissa Fay Greene's *Praying for Sheetrock* (Addison-Wesley, $21.95) (overwritten for my taste, but a wonderful story about how social change comes about and is preserved, and about the relationship between ordinary people and history); Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (Crown, $20) (if it were 1961, this book about poor kids and schools would be *The Other America*; now nobody gives a fuck); Patricia J. Williams's *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Harvard, $24.95) (a bracing and creative analysis that does amazing things with language); and Marilyn B. Young's *The Vietnam Wars* (HarperCollins, $25) (the book about Vietnam I'd give to a 20-year-old if I could give only one).

Finally, I'd like to commend books by two friends, both of whom write superbly—often in these pages—about culture and politics: *Musical Elaborations* by Edward Said (Columbia, $29) and *Professors, Politics and Pop* by Jon Wiener (Verso, $29.95).

NATION INTERNS

In 1972, Harper & Row published Alfred McCoy's damning book on the C.I.A.'s sordid involvement with drug-dealing "allies" in Indochina. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Lawrence Hill, $19.95) is a completely revised and updated edition that discusses, among other things, C.I.A. support for heroin traffickers in the Pakistani military and the Afghan mujahedeen. Despite having received some recent abuse in these pages, McCoy's book is a severe indictment of U.S. drug policy, and it deserves wider currency.

Benedict Anderson's brilliant exegesis on nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, $14.95), has just been reissued. "What makes people love and die for nations, as well as hate and kill in their name?" asks the author. As ethnic hatreds flare, and Bush's election-year handlers plan ways to wrap their candidate in the flag, this book, with two new chapters, comes at just the right time.

To write poetry after Auschwitz, said Adorno, is barbaric. Before long, though, we forget exactly what barbarism is. Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* (Harmony Books, $18) jolts the historical memory. Artfully exploiting the reversal of creation and destruction, Amis has produced a testament to the normalization of atrocity, Pinter's *Betrayal* in the death camps. "I keep expecting the world to make sense," the floating consciousness confides. "It doesn't. It won't. Ever."

Now on the big screen we have *Hearts of Darkness*, a movie about a movie, integrating Eleanor Coppola's documentary footage of the making of *Apocalypse Now* by her husband, Francis Ford Coppola. *Apocalypse Now* was based on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but instead of the savagery of man's soul, the documentary dwells on horrors such as bankruptcy, losing the lead actor and dealing with the whimsies of an obese Marlon Brando. There is more than a hint of self-indulgence in this enterprise, which began as a personal diary. But it provides an insider's perspective on the making of multimillion-dollar movies.

Ignore the rumors of political sellout: Billy Bragg's form on *Don't Try This at Home* (Go Records) is as fine as ever. Die-hard militants can take ideological comfort in "North Sea Bubble" and "The Few," while even the erstwhile Trot should be moved by the mixing of Pop and politics in "Tank Park Salute." Encouraging an ironic sing-along to "The Marching Song of the Covert Battalions" at the New York Ritz in November, Uncle Bill added mischievously, "Some of you have been on the left for so long you've forgotten what irony means." We're making the world safe for capitalism/ Tra-la la-la.

Patriarchy is very evidently flourishing on Capitol Hill and elsewhere, but on the pop-culture scene, the early nineties were a wrestling match with the boys' club. Salt N' Pepa's recent singles collection (from LPs *Hot, Cool and Vicious*, *A Salt With a Deadly Pepa* and *Blacks' Magic*—all on Next Plateau) disses the macho-rapper construct without mercy and proves beyond a doubt that this trio is indeed "not a man but in command" of sex, relationships, money—and rap.

"Is the face of rap turning pale?" asked *The Source* magazine, the indispensable guide to rap music founded by a few Harvard hip-hop fans in 1988 (and still a good read). The answer, of course, is no. The best jams of '91 came straight from the real source. The South Bronx sound of Tim Dog, who heated up the East Coast/ West Coast dispute with the NWA dis "F-ck Compton" on his deadly debut album, *Penicillin on Wax* (Ruffhouse/ Columbia), and the hard dope lyrics on Public Enemy's *Apocalypse '91: The Enemy Strikes Black* (Def Jam/Columbia) shook the house, while Vanilla Ice drowned in the sticky melted mess of his failed feature film. Other wack rumors had it that "message rap" killed the medium and that hard-core acts had tainted rap music into a corner. But, true to form, Original Gangster rapper Ice-T and New York's De La Soul set the record straight, and all in good rhyme. In sum, this year hip-hop fans heard some savory new sounds and saw some old masters kick it home. May '92 ring as true. Peace.

JANE HOLTZ KAY

This was the year that the outhouse replaced the birdhouse as America's architectural icon. The designer birdhouse, you may recall, was shelter for our feathered friends last decade, in the age of affluence. Now it's the outhouse as standard-bearer for the faltering *fin de siècle*. Politicians, Supreme Court nominees and presidential candidates searching for populist symbols have looked to the log cabin and come up with the outhouse (Clarence Thomas) and the coal mine (Tom Harkin) as humble artifacts for the post-S&L century.

Scanning the year for a new decade's pieties and promises, then, we present a clean or dirty dozen highlights on the landscape and cityscape:

"As Maine Goes" Medal: The "use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without" prize goes to the Campaign for Sensible Transportation and the state's voters, who vetoed widening the Maine Turnpike. In November, the citizens of our environmental President's vacation state told the traffic engineers that hardtopping was to be the last resort in planning to transport Down-Easters. May the land of the pointed pines point the way.

Yellow Ribbon for Cold Warrior Design: This prize for peering into an architectural crystal ball goes to the C.I.A.-alerted designers who first decided to demolish the American Embassy in Mos-

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cow in order to get rid of the bugs planted by the (then) spying (now) allying nation. In a classic of architectural overkill, Congress has agreed to spend $300 million for an anti-K.G.B. annex to the fortress that failed. The spied-out eight-story relic will probably endure, next to the even larger addition, a "secured" testament to the cold war mindset.

Birthday Cake With Cartoon Candles: As Disney World celebrates its twentieth birthday, Uncle Walt's Magic Kingdom, which won acclaim for a certain urbanity, now has stars in its eyes—star architects, that is. The thin and humorless new buildings in Orlando include a surreal dolphin-studded hotel by Michael Graves and a wallpapery pastiche for an employment center by Robert A.M. Stern. Postmodern or post–Mickey Mouse, the architects' signatures wave no magic wands.

On Golden Pond Prize: Walden Pond went Hollywood with Don Henley but thus far holds its own, despite developer/publisher Mortimer Zuckerman's paper-shuffling ploy to build a slick office park and turn Thoreau's soul-healing waters into a gilded pond [see Richard Lingeman, "On Walden Pond," October 28]. Credit goes to Concord's Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance for holding fast to Thoreau's values, stalling would-be wasters and enlarging the environmental landscape to historic Walden Woods.

Solid Glass Ark With Hot Tub: Some called it ecology, but it looked more like eco-hype when would-be Whole Earth hermits sealed themselves, more than 3,800 species of plants and animals, and conga drums in a glass dome in a three-acre closed system in Arizona designed to recycle all their needs. The validity of their every-man/woman-is-an-island architecture lasted about as long as a caffeine fix. Critics complained the Biospheronics were fudging their carbon dioxide recycling, while the techno-sealed Stargazers rebutted via phone—Ma Bell's ultimate umbilical cord to Mother Earth.

Fast Food Trashbuster Pin: The McLitterbugs of the fast-food business have gone lite, thanks to the Environmental Defense Fund. Last year, the trash avengers of the E.D.F.-McDonald's Waste Reduction Task Force persuaded the burgermeisters to kick their styrofoam habit. This year, the chain reaction extended to Burger King when that company agreed to reduce its wrapping paper debris, a 15,000 ton paper-saving.

Shroud for Ghost of Christmas Past: Who is that masked man in the black cape? Is the haunt slowing the expansion

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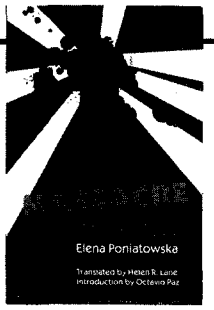

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of the Guggenheim Museum none other than its master architect Frank Lloyd Wright? As the grim new Guggenheim addition (a bunker grafted onto his spiraling masterpiece) by architects Gwathmey Siegel loomed large, officials announced yet another delay in the controversial makeover. Researchers, it seems, had, uh, unearthed more of Wright's original plans and the due date was postponed. Will the architect get his famous revenge by spooking and stalling the bureaucrats?

Wobbly Scale of Justice Award: Twenty years of neighborhood, environmental and architectural protection—the likes of which saved St. Bart's and guarded countless places—is under assault. Land-use cases trickling through the ever more conservative system slashed away at aesthetic/preservation values locally (the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Boyd Theatre) and challenged environmental protection nationally when the Supreme Court took a landowner compensation claim (the South Carolina beach case). The heritage of the decade of the developers now tilts the scales of justice for the over-propertied versus the public.

De-Paving Pins for Petrol Eradication: Huzzahs for the downing of San Francisco's Embarcadero. Undermined by the earthquake and demolished by an enlightened city, the intrusive highway shrouding Fisherman's Wharf and the financial district is tumbling piece by piece, as you read. Another de-paving pin to Transportation Alternatives for their First International Conference for Auto-Free Cities last spring in New York, a pioneer gathering of activists for a livable, walkable and bikeable world.

Incredible Shrinking Word Prize: Deconstruction has hit the printed word. In search of sightbites for the illiterati, publishers attack the printed word, fading and fragmentizing articles with graphic gyrations. In design magazines (*Metropolis*), architecture books (Aaron Betsky's *Violated Perfection*) and catalogues (*The New Urban Landscape*), the medium is the message and the message is illegible.

Bronze Relief for Monumental Kitsch: Breathes there a man/woman with cause so dead who never to him/herself has said: "Make me a monument." Embalming their causes in ugly and intrusive memorials, special-interest advocates have put clunky Vietnam Wall wannabes in awkward intersections and cluttered parks. The spirituality of the Vietnam Wall itself, already undermined by military kitsch, will suffer still another assault with the scheduled installation of a nearby Vietnam Women's Memorial.

Last One Out Turn Out the Lights Torch: It may not be morning in America, but however bleak the economic horizon, the lights won't go out in Times Square. The good news of bad times is the likely demise of the Philip Johnson/John Burgee plan for the 42nd Street district, an overscale, oversubsidized $2.5 billion project. The four monstrous office towers and oversanitized streetscape would have deadened the sidewalks, shut down the theatrical support system and sterilized the skyline of America's Great White Way—"the bright lights and the night frontier," as *Inventing Times Square* calls it—bulldozing the viable if seedy remnants of our Rialto to create one more clone of the eighties marketplace culture.

And may the ball that descends there at midnight illuminate the larger landscape as we count down for the millennium.

STUART KLAWANS

This was the year of *Rust v. Sullivan*, Operation Rescue and the ascension of Clarence Thomas—a wretched year for self-respecting women (not to mention Iraqi civilians and other living things). Curious, then, that 1991 should have begun in cinema with hushed reverence for Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*. "I *love* it," people whispered (I do not exaggerate). Their best explanation for loving serial murder and pop psychology was that a woman got to play the lead and carry a gun. Well, all right; but does that mean *Thelma & Louise* was twice as good? At least—and in that picture, it was *straight* men who took the blame.

So was this really the year of strong women with guns? Would that life were so simple; thank heaven that movies are more complex. This was the year when Su Friedrich contemplated becoming a bride (or was it groom?) in *First Comes Love*; when men were real women in Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning* and vice versa in Kenneth Branagh's *Dead Again*; when Martin Scorsese looked inside the head of a 15-year-old girl and discovered *Cape Fear*. (No, the girl didn't get her hands on a gun, but she did pull off a neat bit of flame throwing.) So much for trends. I might just as well say that 1991 was the year when Keanu Reeves starred in two of the best films (*My Own Private Idaho* and *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey*), as well as in one of the worst, *Point Break*. The moral: Keanu is better off weak and gunless.

For black cinema—more power to it—the year proved equally chaotic. Spike Lee brought out a challenging, open-ended drama in *Jungle Fever* and was criticized for preaching; John Singleton brought out a relentlessly didactic allegory in *Boyz N the Hood* and was hailed for his realism. Go figure. To me, the year's best debut by a black filmmaker was in *New Jack City* by Mario van Peebles; the best by a Hispanic filmmaker, *Hangin' With the Homeboys* by Joseph B. Vasquez. *Chameleon Street*, the remarkable first film by Wendell B. Harris Jr., opened in New York about one year late and promptly vanished again. Too bad—it's secretly *The Clarence Thomas Story*.

Among the better foreign films this year: Agnieszka Holland's *Europa, Europa*; Krzysztof Kieslowski's *The Double Life of Véronique*; Brigitte Roüan's *Overseas*; and, unreviewed in these pages, John Woo's *A Bullet in the Head*, about a Hong Kong Wild Bunch running loose in the middle of the Vietnam War. Some notable documentaries: Peter Cohen's *The Architecture of Doom*, about the aesthetics of Nazism in Europe half a century ago; *Blood in the Face*, by Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway, about Nazism in America today; and the Eric Bogosian–John McNaughton collaboration *Sex, Drugs, Rock 'n' Roll*. I guess it's a documentary—what else would you call it?

As for bad films, I thought Lasse Hallström had clinched the award as early as January 3 when I saw *Once Around*—two hours' worth of Richard Dreyfuss in close-up, screaming at you to *live*. But that experience was painless compared with the spectacle of Bette Midler, wearing fifty pounds of latex, getting up in front of a fully spangled flag and retroactively blessing American war efforts, whatever they might be. To Bette Midler and director Mark Rydell, the award for Worst Film of the Year: *For the Boys*, an All Girl Production.

JOHN LEONARD

Hard as I try, I can't come up with a left-wing angle on a novel about a convent. *Mariette in Ecstasy* by Ron Hansen (HarperCollins, $20) has nothing profound to say about the reproductive rights of women or the Vatican as a patriarchy, though it might help to think of transubstantiation as a form of surplus value. It's just that the shortest novel I've read this year is also the best. And it's all about faith.

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If you wonder what faith looks like, consider these objects, as if from an attic of emotions, brought by believers to the high altar for a Sunday mass in upstate New York in 1906: "geraniums, hothouse flowers, a box of parboiled rabbits, green ferns in a Wardian case, a fancy-worked purple table scarf of Java canvas and silesia, a handmade Aeolian harp, ginger biscuits, huckleberry cake, Ottawa root beer, an old Shetland shawl, a blue ornamental hassock, and a harness dressed in glycerine and tallow."

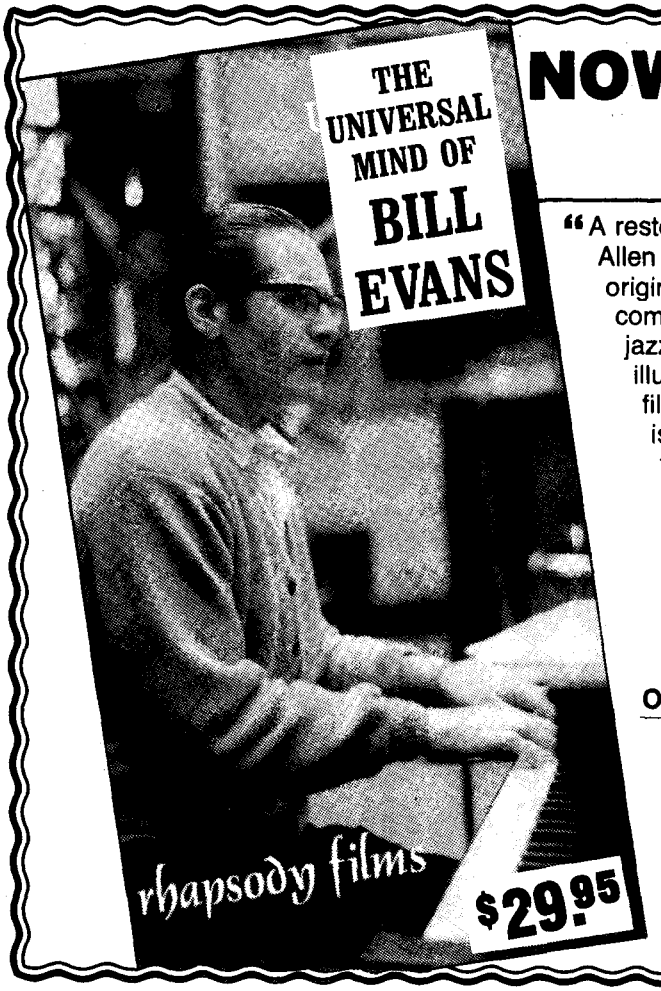
These believers seek a glimpse of 17-year-old Mariette Baptiste, who entered the convent of the Sisters of the Crucifixion in August as a postulant, wanting to become a nun. Although she was warned not to try to be exceptional, "simply be a good nun," by Christmas Day her hands are bleeding and so are her feet. Mariette, in ecstasy, has not only talked to Jesus Christ; she's suffered his wounds on the Cross.

"I don't believe it's possible," says a priest; "I do believe it happened." One Sister is not so sure: "We have had entirely too much mysticism here," she says, "and too little mortification." Another Sister takes the easy way out: "God gives us just enough to seek Him, and never enough to fully find Him. To do more would inhibit our freedom, and our freedom is very dear to God." Mariette's own father, a doctor who smells of iodine, tweed and Turkish cigarette smoke, would prefer to believe her ecstasy is a disease.

Nobody really seems to want another saint. They put Mariette in a cage: "She's too many people. She's too many shades and meanings. She'll only do herself harm." Not to mention calling attention to a convent that shuts its doors on purpose, against a clamorous world, to contemplate the deadly sins, the healing virtues, the works of mercy, the joys of Our Lady and the charisms . . . seven each. Passion is suspect, maybe even *the* Passion.

We hear about the history of stigmata from St. Francis of Assisi on. (Why were so many of them women?) We're introduced to St. Teresa of Avila's *The Way of Perfection* and Dame Julian of Norwich's *Revelations on Divine Love*. We are made to think about sexual rapture as well as hysteria. We meet the nuns one by one, from Sister Genevieve ("a great soft chair of a woman, frank and hearty and jolly, with sun-browned skin that is goose-bumped with pimples and with gruesome nails that she tears with her teeth") to Sister Hermance (who, with reverence, licks the blood on Mariette's hand: "I have tasted you. See?"). As children, they dressed their dolls like Mary and Jesus, played in habits, whipped themselves with knotted apron strings, lay down naked on beds of thorns. As grown-ups, seeking sanctuary, they are innocent, angry, flirtatious, fanatic, befuddled, envious, in their assigned seats in the choir stalls "tiered like jury boxes"; in the hayfields, with "the ringing blades of their scythes"; on their knees to scrub stone floors; with their habits tied high around their thighs to stomp the grapes to make the wine in great oak vats; listening to Schubert or Vivaldi.

But as we are watching, so are we watched, by goats and toads, sheep and owls, peregrine falcons and turtledoves on the telephone wire. From the campanile, as if through God's eye, we see "torn clouds in slow gait to the south like a straggle of gray and white dogs hobbling to their beds." We know—after the green marble altar, the limewood Pietà, the iridescent peacock; after the ox with the wings of Luke, the lion with the wings



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of Mark, the eagle symbolizing John—anything can happen. And everything does, under "a hideous Spanish cross and a painted Christ that is all red meat and agony."

If Mariette is in ecstasy, so is Hansen's prose, a miracle itself, and as hard to explain. For obvious reasons, Flannery O'Connor comes to mind, and Reynolds Price. But I'm reminded more of Japanese painting, and troubadour poetry before the Albigensian Crusade; of haiku and Pascal; of medieval mystery plays and John Donne, St. John of the Cross and Freud's studies in hysteria. Weather and landscape turn, like pages on the church calendar, with a mass for every martyr. If this is Ash Wednesday, where is T.S. Eliot?

We are not at all astonished when Mariette's red-stained handkerchief smells of Easter lilies, when "blood scribbles down her wrists and ankles and scrawls like red handwriting on the floor," nor when the convent decides it just can't handle these mysteries and eroticisms and confoundings. Of the many questions implicit in a text as dense as a Dead Sea scroll, the simplest is this one: If you don't believe in miracles, why are you in the God business?

We aren't astonished but we are spellbound. I won't tell you what happens. Instead of metaphor, this is the real thing, a "magnificent puzzle." We sleep on the straw, and wash our faces in the tin basin with a tan block of soap, and look in the hourglass for a miracle and see the "six crows in the churchyard gleaning St. Anne's squander of popcorn." Listen to Mariette, 30 years after her ecstasy:

> Christ still sends me roses. We try to be formed and held and kept by him, but instead he offers us freedom. And now when I try to know his will, his kindness floods me, his great love overwhelms me, and I hear him whisper, Surprise me.

My other favorites among the year's novels were *Time's Arrow*, by Martin Amis (Harmony Books, $18); *The Campaign*, by Carlos Fuentes (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $22.95); *Three Times Table*, by Sara Maitland (Henry Holt, $18.95); and *News From a Foreign Country Came*, by Alberto Manguel (Clarkson Potter, $19). In nonfiction, I particularly liked *The Book of Embraces*, by Eduardo Galeano (Norton, $19.95); *Which Side Are You On?* by Thomas Geoghegan; *The Starched Blue Sky of Spain*, by Josephine Herbst (HarperCollins, $19.95); *Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?* by Molly Ivins (Random House, $23); and *Patrimony*, by Philip Roth (Simon and Schuster, $19.95).

RICHARD LINGEMAN

"A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us," in the words of Franz Kafka, quoted in Ivan Klíma's novel *Love and Garbage* (Random House, $21.95). Klíma, a Czech writer, clearly had that admonition in his sights in composing his somber tale, about a writer who takes a job as a street sweeper and meditates on the indestructibility of garbage and souls alike. This is a quintessentially Eastern European novel that confronts the big questions of love, death and the State.

If Klíma updates the Old World pessimism of Kafka's Prague, Norman Rush in *Mating* (Knopf, $23) gives us smart, cynical, New World love and sexual politics in the 1990s. The novel seems talky at times, but it has a lot that is cogent to say. A spacious performance, Joycean in language, that aims for the head more than the heart.

Anne Tyler, by contrast, knows almost too well that home is where the American heartland is. Her latest novel, *Saint Maybe* (Knopf, $22), parades her engagingly goofy, underlyingly sad Americans; her ear for the vernacular and her eye for the significant details of U.S. life over a span of years. How far we have come from Hawthorne's Pastor Dimmesdale to Tyler's storefront preacher who salvages guilt-ridden souls at his Church of the Second Chance, a fictional construct that seems nicely tailored to contemporary pop *angst*!

Taking me back to my own spotless childhood, Philip Appleman's evocative novel *Apes and Angels* (Putnam, $18.95) is set in a small Indiana town in 1941.

In the biography category, I enjoyed Jimmy Breslin's raffish portrait of the raffish Damon Runyon (Ticknor & Fields, $24.95); Penelope Niven's full-scale life of Carl Sandburg (Scribner's, $35); and Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones's *The Patriarch* (Summit, $24.95), which chronicles the decline and fall of the Bingham newspaper dynasty in Louisville. Celia Gittleson's *Biography* (Knopf, $19), a Bernard Malamudish novel about a man writing the life of a Delmore Schwartzish poet, conveys the message "Biographer, know thyself!" in a fresh way.

As Harry Truman once said, "The only thing new in the world is the history you don't know." History helps us understand how we got in our present pickle, and Haynes Johnson's *Sleepwalking Through History: America in the Reagan Years* (Norton, $24.95), though not a definitive account, will raise your gorge and angry up the blood.

Clark Clifford's *Counsel to the President* (Random House, $25) has some good historical anecdotes about Truman and other Presidents I Have Known, but it left me hungry for a biography about this elegant insider and consummate dealmaker. Clifford's tales of Truman's 1948 campaign have some relevance today, since President Bush seems bent on running against Congress. Truman had a progressive program to present. What will Bush do—call for a constitutional amendment declaring supply-side economics the national religion? Yes, brothers and sisters, there is a second chance if you will only believe!

JUDITH LONG

In a year when a Nazi grand wizard with a chin implant ran for governor, Thelma and Louise passed for feminists and Long Dong Silver made the High Court, I took flight into fiction, hopping a good book to anyplace but here. Got off to a fast start with *Indiscreet Journeys: Stories of Women on the Road*, edited by Lisa St Aubin de Tarán. Few indiscretions but many journeys, spanning miles, centuries, minds and hearts in this collection of tales from the likes of Colette, Edith Wharton, Grace Paley, Beryl Markham and Box-Car Bertha, "sister of the road" (Faber & Faber, $19.95). Next found myself in 1830s Jamaica, where Jean Rhys created a nightmare of oppressive tropical lushness, innocence and cruelty, Creoles, freed slaves and the English in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton, $4.95), her tale of the first Mrs. Rochester—known to generations of readers only as the madwoman in the attic in *Jane Eyre*. Then up to turn-of-the-century New Orleans for Kate Chopin's exquisitely wrought *The Awakening*, sounding themes Thelma could relate to—marital suffocation and suicide—which got it yanked off library shelves in 1899 (Norton, $6.95). Off *To Asmara*, Thomas Keneally's page-turner about journalists traveling with the E.P.L.F. in Eritrea—a thriller/civil war primer (Warner, paper $10.95). Similar illuminations of the personal/political can be found in Nadine Gordimer's *A Sport of Nature* (Penguin, paper $10). Headed back to France for *Jigsaw: An Unsentimental*

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Education, Sybille Bedford's fictionalized account of growing up on the Riviera, sans school, sans money (but with neighbors like the Aldous Huxleys) and with her mother's madness and morphine (Knopf, $19.95). Found another unsentimental tale of coming of age amid seaside madness and poverty (abject, not Riviera-style), Jean Stafford's flawless *Boston Adventure*, a closely observed rendering of immigrants and Back Bay Brahmins (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, paper $7.95). Heading Down East in August, I happened on *Midsummer Passion & Other Tales of Maine Cussedness*, by Erskine ("Banned in Boston") Caldwell. Yes, before his sordid Southern days, he honed his prose on hardscrabble Yankees a generation or so before Carolyn Chute's Beans, trailers, Letourneaus and used auto parts (Yankee Books, $11.95). (A nonfiction find: *The Ladies of Castine: From the Minutes of the Castine, Maine, Woman's Club*, by Miriam Anne Bourne, shows what small-town women could accomplish, before suffrage and after (Arbor House, $19.95). A "classic British detective" is not my cup of tea, but Michael Kenyon's *Peckover Holds the Baby* took me to London and Belize, and besides the red herrings and shootouts beloved by mystery types, I liked its farcical bits, its wordplay and our hero's squeamishness about guns (Avon, $3.50). Back in the U.S.A. and on the road again, this time *The Powwow Highway*, David Seals's Native American joy ride with a mission. It has the funniest opening chapter I've read all year and a gas-guzzling rustmobile named Protector as a central character (New American Library, $8.95). Back home on the reservation, Louise Erdrich's "The Bingo Van" (*The New Yorker*, February 19,1990), a glitzy passion-wagon loaded with options, winds up as dead as old Protector but without his noble mission. Erdrich at her tragicomic best. And that leaves me busted flat in Bingoville waiting for a train, wondering if it's safe to read the news.

N.B. Two shows for hard times: Fox television's *In Living Color*, black humor, not for the irony-impaired. NPR's *Car Talk* with Click & Clack, the Tappit Brothers. They fix everything but a broken heart.

VICTOR NAVASKY

Instead of a list, a toast: To a yuppie who dreamed he saw Joe Hill last night, a lawyer who writes like a dream, Tom Geoghegan, who knows which side he is on. *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* is Tom G.'s low-key, impassioned but sometimes hilarious account of his life as a labor lawyer. Along the way he provides a thumbnail history of the rise and disintegration of organized labor in the United States. But his citations run to Shakespeare and *Fibber McGee and Molly* and Ignazio Silone and Edith Wharton and Tom Wolfe rather than to cases and court decisions and legal briefs. And although he perfectly captures what it's like to represent the rank and file day-to-day, this self-effacing, idealistic reformer is the first to tell you that he is "not on the cutting edge of anything." (For the cutting edge, see Barbara Kopple's Oscar-deserving documentary on the Hormel strike, *American Dream*.) We're lucky he didn't follow his mother's advice: "Just tell people you work for the poor. It makes it simpler."

ANNE-MARIE OTEY

With New York Mayor David Dinkins's approval ratings sinking lower than deposed Mayor Ed Koch's at any point in his twelve-year reign, pun-

"STANDS UP TO COMPARISON WITH THE GREAT ROMANTIC AUTOBIOGRAPHIES"*

"Ben Sonnenberg tells of growing up rich—'a collectors' child'—in one of the last grand houses in New York. He looks unsparingly on his father's success, the Gramercy Park house and his long career as seducer, poseur, spy."

Jean Strouse, author of *Alice James*

"Sourly beautiful. . . Haunting."

Alexander Cockburn, *New Statesman*

"Coldly painful and beautifully written."

Richard Eder, *Los Angeles Times*

"...better than brilliant: irresistible. *Lost Property* stands up to comparison with the great romantic autobiographies, with Stendhal's *Life of Henri Brulard* . . . with Cyril Connolly's aphoristic *The Unquiet Grave*. . . Its style is just right: darting, anecdotal, slightly bemused, possessing a lilting irony that makes for compulsive readability. There's also something funny, sexy or shocking on every page."

Michael Dirda, *Washington Post**

"A most elegant and mischievous entertainment."

Dan Cryer, *New York Newsday*

"... proud, viciously funny and pained."

Jane Mendelsohn, *VLS*

"... the generosity of these memoirs, to everyone but the memoirist, compels admiration."

Daryl Hine, *New York Times Book*

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dits are predicting he'll be a one-term Mayor. They're also predicting that a reactionary electorate will overpower Dinkins's coalition and elect thin-lipped smirker Rudolph Giuliani, the 1989 runner-up, or Republican lite Andrew Stein. A new book says that doesn't have to happen. *Changing New York City Politics* (Routledge, paper $14.95), by Asher Arian, Arthur Goldberg, John Mollenkopf and Edward Rogowsky of CUNY, asserts that issues, not strict racial identification, determined Dinkins's narrow victory in the 1989 race. And therefore, any candidate running on the issues of homelessness, education and affordable housing can recapture the black, Latino and liberal coalition that put Dinkins into power. While the book is an analysis of how Dinkins won, it is also, because of Dinkins's disappointing performance so far, a guide to deposing him.

"In Lower New York Bay, below the Verrazano Bridge, there is an artificial ledge known as New Grounds, or Doorknob Grounds, made up from the wreckage of tenements," writes Luc Sante in a more amused and aesthetic view of New York titled *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $27.50). It's a tour of Manhattan from 1840 to the 1920s with an eye for corruption, crime and decadence. Sante doesn't condone this history (which includes, for example, the fact that there were 40,000 homeless children in New York in 1849). But he shows how futile it is to remove that past entirely from the city and how, as in the tenement reef, its traces remain. While Sante argues that the city is a place of constant change, he also points out that certain areas retain their old status: "The homeless are camped on the sites of nineteenth-century shantytowns." Seen through the patterns Sante detects, the mad real estate development of the 1980s, which saw glass cities perch on dilapidated piers and yuppies looking for light and space by taking over industrial lofts, looks all the more absurd.

A fictional look at Sante's city, updated to the 1990s, is the subject of Mary Gaitskill's work. Her first novel, *Two Girls, Fat and Thin* (Poseidon, $18.95), ties the details of the city into the lives of its characters, as Gaitskill also does in her story collection, *Bad Behavior* (Vintage, paper $7.95). In *Two Girls* Gaitskill is writing very allegorical, contrived fiction—the heroines meet when one is interviewing the other for an article on Definitism, an Ayn Rand–like movement of right-wing stoicism, and there are comparisons between the heroines' lives and the movement's tenets. But other instances and phrases are creating a new vernacular of female cynicism and sexuality: the female rapist who "felt her personality filling the room like a gorging swine"; the self-conscious masochist who, when considering a potential lover, looks back on "their recent heinous intimacy."

Back in real life, New York is a harsh place for women in Joelle Sander's *Before Their Time: Four Generations of Teenage Mothers* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $19.95). Sander, an education researcher, sought to explain how the pattern of teenage childbearing runs through one family. The narratives from four women, though, contain as many differences as similarities. The great-great-grandmother and great-grandmother are middle-class homeowners; their family's fourth generation goes through crack addiction in the longest and most harrowing section of the book. That section also tells of intense intervention by social-service bureaucrats and friendly Y.W.C.A. counselors. Their efforts are frustrated, leading me to ask how much the state can accomplish against the twin problems of abusive childhood and the staying power of a female role that gives satisfaction in the form of a baby, "a fantasy," Sander concludes, "that [teenagers] want to enact as soon as possible."

RICHARD POLLAK

I am in a musical mood, so, at the risk of endorsing Dread Multiculturalism at this holiday season, let's start with the London revival of *Carmen Jones*: libretto by a white American man (Oscar Hammerstein 2d), based on an opera by three white Europeans (Georges Bizet, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, from a novel by yet another white European, Prosper Mérimée) about a Gypsy temptress from Seville who ends badly, as does her Hammersteined counterpart, a black siren from South Carolina sung this time out with seductive abandon by the stunning soprano Wilhelmenia Fernandez in a production featuring an all-black, mostly American cast energized by the British director Simon Callow—at the Old Vic! If you can't get to London, you can still go "Whizzin' Away Along de Track" with the cast CD, from EMI Classics.

Less hot-blooded, but just as imaginative, was the second annual summer music festival at Bard College, which this year shined its considerable light on Felix Mendelssohn and his contemporaries in a series of concerts that, like last year's exploration of Brahms and his era, were not only generally well performed but often accompanied by short, unstuffy lectures that broke down the iron curtain that too often divides classical music from its audiences. The program also offered many fresh faces, eschewing the tired stars who monopolize the concert stages in this country. For those who wanted to delve deeper into the music, Bard arranged for the publication last year of *Brahms and His World* (edited by Walter Frisch) and this year of *Mendelssohn and His World* (edited by R. Larry Todd), both from Princeton University Press. . . . If the Bard folk ever do Chopin and his world, they should screen this year's *Impromptu*, which starred Hugh Grant as the tubercular composer and Judy Davis as the feisty George Sand in a film that combined feminism, romanticism and great music, and humanized geniuses instead of deifying them.

Is Maureen McGovern the best woman pop singer in the country? Yes, by a dotted whole note. Catch her on the Garrison Keillor show, or on *Naughty Baby*, her Gershwin CD (CBS), and she'll cast you in a spell of laughter and tears with her laser pitch, astonishing range and gift for breathing "beauty into a lyric" (Mel Tormé, who knows). And if there are no lyrics, she's unfazed, as she shows by vocalizing Gershwin's Piano Prelude II with a jazzy rubato he would have loved. . . . Speaking of Gershwin, there was Stan Freeman all wreathed in cigarette smoke and neuroses doing his impersonation of Oscar Levant in *boîtes* across the land. He captures the curmudgeonly pianist and wit even to playing "Rhapsody in Blue" almost as well as his subject. 'Swonderful.

KATHA POLLITT

Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back is a rueful, funny, impassioned memoir of twenty years of union-lawyering by Thomas Geoghegan, who's part Candide, part guilt-ridden yuppie and part secular saint. Geoghegan combines a disarming personal modesty with a stirring defense of industrial unionism. Read it to find out why labor can't organize (it's practically illegal), strike (ditto) or clean its own house. Read it, too, for his poetic evocation of the dying glories of Chicago, no longer the city that works, in either sense of the word.

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Diane Wood Middlebrook's *Anne Sexton* (Houghton Mifflin, $24.95) is a solid literary biography that raises fascinating questions in many directions. You can read it as the story of a gifted woman rescued by psychiatrists, or as the story of a pre-feminist rebel undermined by same, whose main concern was to perpetuate her dependence on them while protecting one another from the malpractice suits they richly deserved. Read the book, then take the test: Do you want *your* shrink to spill your inmost beans to posterity? What if posterity isn't interested? Can the dead blush?

Susan Faludi's *Backlash* (Crown, $24) is a terrifically spirited refutation of all those equality-is-bad-for-women arguments that flourished during the "post-feminist" eighties. From *Fatal Attraction* to fundamentalism, the Victoria's Secret catalogue to Sylvia Ann Hewlett, it's been a rough decade for women: While our quest for equal rights stagnates, the media constantly harp on the dire fate awaiting any woman who doesn't rush to the altar with the nearest live body of the opposite sex. It's about time someone put her finger on what's been going on, and I even forgive Faludi for not citing my own deconstruction of that notorious Harvard-Yale study of older women's marital "chances." You read it here first. But never mind, it's Christmas. All is forgiven.

Mary Gordon's *Bad Boys and Dead Girls* (Viking, $19.95) draws together the essays of our pre-eminent literary feminist. The title piece alone is worth the price of admission. It's a brilliant, original analysis of a major unacknowledged theme in American life and letters: the man with a major ambition and the woman who gets in his way. As Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths, so Updike's Rabbit Angstrom. For the real-life version, consider the Clarence Thomas hearings. Or the St. John's sexual assault trial. Or the Palm Beach rape trial. Or . . .

Ben Sonnenberg's memoir, *Lost Property: Memoirs & Confessions of a Bad Boy* (Summit, $18.95) is a prickly, witty, erudite book by the man who, after a thoroughly enjoyable life of wealthy dissipation, including a brief stint in the C.I.A. (what were they *thinking* of?), founded *Grand Street*, to my mind the freshest literary-political quarterly since the glory days of *Partisan Review*. It's a funny thing: Money used to enable the rich to live in the future, i.e., with cleanliness and leisure and all the latest inventions, like automobiles and central heating. Now mod cons are for the masses, and what wealth does is enable its possessors to live in the nineteenth century, dallying with parlor maids and dining beneath Old Masters. Sonnenberg comes across as a rather Jamesian figure, unable, for all his Euro-style pleasure seeking, to evade the very American conviction that life ought to Mean Something. So it should, and we are all supremely fortunate that Sonnenberg found his meaning—first in *Grand Street*, and now in this elegant, surprisingly moving memoir.

Finally, what's Christmas without the movies? *Antonia & Jane* is Beeban Kidron's hilarious film about two friends who have nothing in common except, unbeknownst to themselves, their therapist. Antonia is fortune's darling, Jane her long-suffering frumpish foil. But life has a way of evening old scores, and watching it happen here is delicious fun. *Antonia & Jane* will strike a chord in the heart of any woman with a best friend, or any man who's had to listen to one woman analyze said friend for hours, for years. Which covers just about all of us, I think.

EDWARD W. SAID

Two extraordinary record re-issues top the list for 1991: Wilhelm Kempff's nine-disc Deutsche Grammophon set of the thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas, originally issued in the 1960s, and Glenn Gould's remarkable, as well as unexpected, rendition of the Chopin B minor Sonata (Music & Arts), taken off a 1970 broadcast recital in Toronto. Of all the Beethoven renditions, Kempff's is, in my opinion, by far the most eloquent and beautiful in tone; like Schnabel and often Brendel, he has an integral vision, mostly lacking in his competitors. I shall write about him in an upcoming column. The Gould Chopin, which is accompanied by an electrifying performance of the Scriabin Fifth Sonata, is odd because he clearly disliked Chopin and is very ill at ease in the opening movement, which sounds pedagogic and dutiful. As the piece progresses he produces stunning effects, nowhere more brilliantly than in the last movement, which rivals Rubinstein's. A recent record of note is the Boulez-Heinz Holliger recording of the Elliot Carter Oboe Concerto (Erato), composed in 1987. Like the 1990 Violin Concerto, it has a surprisingly lyrical quality to it, perfectly laid out and flattering to the soloists; in Holliger's case, as usual, a superb performance.

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duced two-volume *Letters From a Life, 1923-45*. Benjamin Britten's letters, compiled by Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed (University of California, $125; $175 after January 1); a new and long-overdue translation by Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey of Adorno's *Albin Berg: Master of the Smallest Link* (Cambridge, $39.95), his most personal and affectionate work, as full of deep insight and brilliant formulations as his monographic works on Mahler and Richard Strauss; Rose Subotnik's collection of essays in *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (University of Minnesota, $39.95; paper $16.95), which features much of the most interesting and *intellectually* challenging work done today in American musicology; Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (University of Minnesota, $39.95; paper $14.95), a novel feminist contribution, full of surprising ingenuity and greatly needed social commentary on the production and interpretation of classical music.

Lastly, a French book, volume six of Jean Genet's *Oeuvres complètes*, made up of most of his political writings on 1968, immigrants' rights, Black Panthers and Palestinians, as well as a few remarkable personal interviews. The book's title is *L'Ennemi déclaré* (Gallimard).

KIRKPATRICK SALE

As an unstinting public service, I'd like to direct attention to three books recently published—though "privished," as they say, is more like it—that you would likely otherwise not know about.

Ancient Futures: Learning From Ladakh, by Helena Norberg-Hodge (Sierra Club, $25). Norberg-Hodge has spent the last sixteen years as a student and champion of the people of Ladakh, the remote and beautiful Himalayan region in the northwest corner of India. This book, her first, though full of stories and photographs of the Ladakhi way of life, is much more than a travelogue; it is, if I may so put it, an ecologue.

For what she is saying, carefully and charmingly, is that the Western industrial "monoculture" that has infected and endangers the rich ancient culture of Ladakh is the one that is endangering us, its progenitors, as well. Despite its vaunted trappings, it is not socially or ecologically sustainable, and its dream of an effortless, ever-growing mechanical civilization based on consumption and "development" is as chimerical for us as for the non-Western people we are luring into it.

"The emerging global economy and the growing domination of science and technology," writes Norberg-Hodge, "are not only severing our connection to nature and to one another but also breaking down natural and cultural diversity," such as the beleaguered land of Ladakh so well represents. "In doing so," she adds, darkly but rightly, "we are threatening our very existence." A book that must be heeded.

Democracy From the Heart: Spiritual Values, Decentralism, and Democratic Idealism in the Movement of the 1960s, by Gregory Nevala Calvert (Communitas Press, Box 2510, Novato, CA 94948, $29.95, paper $14.95). The name Greg Calvert may be familiar to those who remember the S.D.S. leadership of the mid-1960s or who have come across the book he did with Carol Nieman in 1971, *A Disrupted History*. Well, he has had a somewhat checkered career since then—as lay psychotherapist, drug-abuse counselor, homosexual rights activist and, recently, Ph.D. in political and social theory—and now he has written (and published with his own press) a thorough re-examination of the New Left of those years, sifting out the positive and affirmative from the misguided and chaotic.

This is a very necessary reassessment, and it will be both evocative and informative for those who lived through the sixties. But its analysis is pertinent to anyone who cares about an independent political theory for the American left and how to put it about the next time around.

The issues are all complex, and treated complexly, and there's no way to do them justice in brief. But Calvert himself offers this summary: "The instinct of the young radicals of SDS who framed political debate in the 1960s in terms of *value-centered democratic political theory* laid the basis for the new political discourse that will guide radical democratic experimentation in the next generation." At least we may hope so, and there will be no better guide than this.

In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations, by Jerry Mander (Sierra Club, $25). As you can tell from the subtitle, this is a somewhat bifurcated book, though the underlying connection is that it is in Indian cosmology and Indian resistance that we can find an alternative to "the technological juggernaut" that has failed us. The first half is a skewering critique of modern technology, in which cars, telephones, computers, banks, biogenetics and television (the subject of Mander's previous book) all are shown to be part of a mad "megatechnology" that is destroying the world's resources and robotizing its peoples; the second is a celebration of Indians' struggles against the society that is forcing this megatechnology upon them, with a hortatory message about how we can all join in the fight.

It's a little West Coast for my taste, but there are lots of stories and anecdotes, including Mander's own good works as a nonprofit advertising maven, to enliven the message. And it's a message that must be heard.

GENE SANTORO

For the record industry, the holiday season now means boxed-set mania. Pity its honchos; they're facing their worst recession since the late seventies. So have a heart; pick a set from the handful below.

The Birth of Swing (1935-1936) (Bluebird) captures Benny Goodman around the time that his Palomar Ballroom broadcasts helped swing-era jazz cross over from a racially bounded audience to the white mainstream. With good sound and a booklet featuring a retrospective essay by veteran critic George T. Simon and track-by-track discussions by saxophonist/swing fanatic Loren Schoenberg, this three-CD pack is solid and diverting.

MJQ4O (Atlantic) celebrates the Modern Jazz Quartet's four decades. The group's pristine compositions and amber-like arrangements crystallized the essence of cool jazz. Even today, when this vein can seem mannered, an M.J.Q. small-club performance brings to vivid life their understated but rich interplay. These four CDs may be too much for nonfans, but the fine production and informative essay by Gary Giddins are clearly meant, like the band, to last.

Fats Domino may be the most congenial r&b artist ever, a master of the cheery drawl, pleasant lament, Basie-like spare piano and New Orleans beats. That combo made his brand of r&b a central influence on rock and roll. The four-CD *They Call Me the Fat Man...* (EMI) collects many of his early Imperial recordings (the ones you want to hear) and his later ones (which you probably don't). The fascinating booklet bears facts, pix and context from Jeff Hannusch and Adam Block.

Ray Charles is, quite simply, one of the geniuses of postwar pop. Though he's been largely reduced to saccharine Vegas-

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style revues and arrangements, his pioneering work in the fifties and sixties forged the sounds of the future. *Ray Charles: The Birth of Soul* (Atlantic), a three-CD set, compiles all his sides for that label's 1950s glory days. It boasts excellent sound, good pictures and session information, and a good (if sloppily edited) essay by Robert Palmer.

Patsy Cline was a pivot for postwar country music. In the fifties, her Owen Bradley-próduced hits took Nashville into the pop mainstream via syrupy strings and white-bread backup vocals. *The Patsy Cline Collection* (MCA) fills four CDs with a comprehensive overview of her nine-year career; the booklet, with an exhaustive essay by Paul Kingsbury, serves up a wealth of information. And country lovers should check out *The Essential Marty Robbins 1951-1982* (Columbia/Legacy), whose two CDs gather hits like "El Paso" with lesser-known ones; the overview by Rich Kienzle, discographic info and photos of posters and T-shirts make the booklet a small trove.

There are three good reasons to buy the four-CD *Phil Spector: Back to Mono (1958-1969)* (abkco). First, it's got the greatest hits of the Tycoon of Teen (as Tom Wolfe's excerpted booklet essay dubs him)—which means work by one of pop's most demented and, for a time, inspired *auteurs*. Second, the Spector Wall of Sound is rendered with exquisite extravagance. Third, you get a digitally remastered CD of his semilegendary Christmas album and a free "Back to Mono" button with each set.

The four-CD *Stages* (Reprise) traces Jimi Hendrix's live-show development across four years and two continents. In some ways it's a silly idea: The Hendrix performances here come from both early radio and stage, an unusable comparison since the formatting is so different. But the later concerts, especially the fire-breathing guitar work in 1970 in Atlanta, deserve serious attention and will take your breath away: Hendrix was clearly finding a way to his version of the Coltrane territory.

Bob Marley & the Wailers—the original Wailers, with Marley's childhood pals Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer—began life as a suited vocal trio entwining doo-wop, r&b, gospel and the jacked-up-and-turned-around ska beat. The two-CD *One Love* (Heartbeat) documents their 1963-66 period via good original mixes, rare and previously unissued stuff and ample and rewarding print from Roger Steffens and Leroy Jodie Pierson.

The three-CD *Clash on Broadway* (Epic/Legacy) spans five years' worth of incendiary sounds with considerable sonic polish, and has maximum detail in its excellent booklet, which boasts essays by Lenny Kaye and the late Lester Bangs as well as band members' comments and background from longtime Clash intimate Kosmo Vinyl. The elaborate package may seem incongruous for self-described punks, but even the prototypical Sex Pistols were at least as much about marketing as music.

Other recent boxes—like the three on Billie Holliday, one on the Howlin' Wolf, the two on Lightnin' Hopkins, and one on the Coltrane—will be discussed in future columns.

GRACE SCHULMAN

One of the year's most powerful books in any genre is Thylias Moss's fourth collection of poems, *Rainbow Remnants in Rock Bottom Ghetto Sky* (Persea, paper $9.95). It is in the National Poetry Series, selected by Charles

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Simic. A joyful discovery, this book contains poems that present the black American experience with heightened intensity, for they are imaginative reconstructions of ordinary lives. Their language is at once immediate and transcendent, as in these lines from "Tornados":

> Truth is, I envy them
> *not* because they dance; I out jitterbug
> them
> as I'm shuttled through and through
> *legs*
> strong as looms, weaving time. They
> do black more justice than I, frenzy
> *of conductor of philharmonic and elec-*
> tricity, hair
> on end, result of the charge when horns
> and strings release
> the pent up Beethoven and Mozart.
> Ions played
>
> instead of notes. The movement
> is not wrath, not hormone swarm
> because
> I saw my first forming above the church
> a surrogate
> steeple. The morning of my first bap-
> tism and
> salvation already tangible, funnel for
> the spirit
> coming into me without losing a drop,
> my black
> guardian angel come to rescue me
> before all the words
>
> get out, *I looked over Jordan and what*
> *did I see coming for to carry me*
> *home.*

Stitching Porcelain (New Directions, paper $9.95), by Deborah Larsen, is a remarkable first book of poems by a Discovery–*The Nation* contest winner. It is a sequence based on the life of Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit in sixteenth-century China. A long poem, "Blue Lights," is musical, ironic, passionate. From the Hebrew Bible, David Rosenberg's *A Poet's Bible* (Hyperion, $22.95) is a sometimes bluesy, always fresh, rendering of the original text.

And about poetry: M.L. Rosenthal's *Our Life in Poetry: Selected Essays and Reviews* (Persea, $47.50) is a hefty (580 pages) book that represents his nearly half-century of dedication. Rosenthal is a former poetry editor of *The Nation*, and many of these essays were originally printed in these pages. One such piece is his landmark review of Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* (September 19, 1959), which generated the term "confessional" as applied to a school of poetry. Rosenthal wrote: "The use of poetry for the most naked kind of confession grows apace in our day."

DENNIS SELBY

On those tragically rare occasions that I meet someone I *really* like, I cajole, push and then order them to read Ivy Compton-Burnett. Anything by her, since all her books are wondrously of an ilk. If, after obeying me (and naturally none dares not to), they don't like her, I begin to wonder what I ever saw in them. Ivy Compton-Burnett is civilization at its most savage, wit at its most desiccate, and tragedy at its most refined. To describe her more fully would be to ruin the shock. Two of her novels are currently available in Penguin paperbacks, *Parents and Child* and *Present and Past*, each priced $6.95.

Which is not to say that there are no delicious living authors to recommend. Anyone unfamiliar with Edward Field's poems should immediately rectify this appalling ignorance. He writes poems that are uneffete, unobscure, unprecious, and quite unlike this sentence. In fact, he's the best unpoet around. *New and Selected Poems* (Sheep Meadow Press, $15.95; paper $9.95).

TED SOLOTAROFF

Here are some books I'd like to recommend.

Kurt Wolff: A Portrait in Essays and Letters (University of Chicago Press, $24.95). Pure oxygen and nutrition for exhausted and demoralized editors and publishers. One of the prophetic publishers of the century, first in Germany then in the United States, Wolff instances in these modest reminiscences and correspondence with authors (Kafka, Werfel, Kraus, Rilke, Mann, Pasternak, Grass, et al.) the vision and devotion that bound them to him and that made him—the secret of his calling—"synonymous with his work."

Philip Roth's *Patrimony* (Simon and Schuster, $19.95). Roth arguably writes the best sentences in American prose today, and in this memoir of conducting his father up into the mountains of a life that is ending he has found a subject that stretches his realism to the point of genius.

David Lehman's *Sign of the Times* (Poseidon Press, $22.95). If you want to know what all the fuss is about deconstruction and the fascist background of Paul de Man, its principal emissary, this is the book to read. Though Lehman is one of the prosecutors in the case, he cuts through the arcane and dissimulating mystifications of the method and the defense of de Man with a much-needed clarity, specificity and sense of implication.

Charles Baxter's *A Relative Stranger* (Norton, $17.95). A collection of stories from the heart of the American heartland, in this case mostly Michigan. Baxter is well on his way to becoming the next master of the short story and, like Trevor and Carver, has the special gift of capturing the shadow of genuine significance as it flits across the face of the ordinary.

Frank Bidart's *In the Western Night: Collected Poems, 1965–1990* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $19.95). The first book of poems in a long time that I read from cover to cover in one sitting. What struck me most and continually was how inhabited his poetry is by the souls of his subjects, including himself. Such is his spiritual tact and intensity.

And some special pleading. Two of the last books I edited at HarperCollins cry out to be mentioned in *The Nation*: The first is Edward Lazarus's *Black Hills/White Justice: The Sioux Nations versus The United States, 1775 to the Present* ($27.50). This is a blow-by-blow, lie-by-lie, litigation-by-litigation account of how the Sioux experienced America's manifest destiny in the courts after witnessing it on the Great Plains and in the Black Hills. Masterfully told, persuasively argued. The other book is a first novel by Brian Morton. Titled *The Dylanist* (as in Bob) ($19.95), it's the finest account in my experience of why the best of the younger generation lack conviction and of their struggle to gain some.

KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL

Cold, rational analysis of events in Russia pales in comparison with the raw emotions preserved in Anna Akhmatova's poems. Akhmatova, one of Russia's greatest twentieth-century poets, lived through and recorded the collective suffering of a nation during two world wars and the Stalinist terror. Her poems—some of which have surfaced only recently in the Soviet Union—are gathered in an extraordinary two-volume bilingual edition, *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*, translated by Judith Hemschemeyer, edited and introduced by Roberta Reeder (Zephyr Press, $85).

In the spring of 1915, Nina Berberova heard Akhmatova read her poetry in St. Petersburg. A writer, poet and muse, Berberova—at the age of 89—has just been discovered in the United States (she is well known in Europe), and several of her un-

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sentimental and brilliantly observed tales of life in the Russian emigration are collected in a slim book, *The Tattered Cloak and Other Novels* (Knopf, $21).

A different kind of Russian woman, Raisa Gorbachev, tells her side of the *perestroika* years in *I Hope*, translated by David Floyd (HarperCollins, $20). However fragmentary and reticent, it is the first real memoir we have had by a wife of any Russian leader. It is also a surprisingly interesting book by an exceptional woman.

For nearly a decade, Gale Warner has been conducting workshops in the Soviet Union on nonviolence and global security. In *The Invisible Threads* (Seven Locks Press, $13.95), Warner gives voice to Soviet men and women we rarely hear from—students, hippies, antinuclear activists. Her book is a valuable counterpoint to newspaper and television reports that dwell on political actors and disputes at the top.

The Truth About Chernobyl, by Grigori Medvedev (Basic Books, $22.95), is a remarkable and sobering account of the world's worst nuclear accident by the man who headed the investigation of it. Medvedev reveals the lies, the secrecy, the bureaucratic delusions and the technological hubris that brought about the disaster. It is a gripping narrative and a cautionary tale for all countries.

On the home front, Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (Crown, $24) is a passionately argued and carefully documented account of the backlash against feminism.

You may have read her columns in *The Nation*, *Mother Jones* or *Ms.* Now, Molly Ivins's political wisdom, colorful exaggerations and wild analogies can be savored in a collection of her pieces, *Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?* (Random House, $23). I can't wait to read her coverage of the 1992 elections.

JON WIENER

Elaine Dundy, *Elvis and Gladys* (St. Martin's, $13.95). A serious biography of the mother of the quintessential mama's boy. Of the 150 Elvis titles in print, this is the best at tracing the cultural forces and experiences that shaped the King. Dundy went to Tupelo, Mississippi, where the Presleys lived until 1948, when Elvis was 13. She started at the Senior Citizens' Recreation Center, tracking down and interviewing Elvis's mother's old friends, relatives and neighbors—several dozen of them. Ophelia Harris still remembers Gladys's "crazy" buck dancing to Jimmie Rodgers's "Corinna, Corinna." Other people had other memories: A black neighbor in Tupelo told Dundy that the Presleys "were always on our side."

Kitty Kelley, *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography* (Simon and Schuster, $24.95). This is 528 pages of good clean fun—especially the family stories. During the eight years Reagan was Governor of California, Nancy did not speak to his two children, Michael and Maureen; she disowned their daughter, Patti; and she sent their son Ron away to boarding school. Then in 1975 Nancy called a family conference to tell the children Reagan was going to run for President. Patti was not invited, but the other three came. Michael told his father he hoped the campaign would bring the family closer together. "But the family *is* close," the Magoo-like Reagan replied. Nancy entered the room at that point and asked what they were talking about; when Michael told her, she snapped, "I wouldn't count on it." That was our first family.

Martin Duberman, *Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey* (Dutton, $19.95). An extraordinary account of life in the closet during the fifties and sixties. Although Duberman joins with the blossoming civil rights and antiwar movements, he stays on the sidelines when gay pride marchers fill Fifth Avenue. The center of the book is Dr. Karl, a vicious quack of a therapist who promises to cure the talented young Princeton professor of his affliction. Duberman reveals the horrifying and occasionally hilarious events that led him to conclude, finally, that the personal is political.

Melissa Fay Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock* (Addison-Wesley, $21.95). How the civil rights movement came twenty years late to a forgotten backwater on the Georgia coast. A crooked sheriff helps locals fleece the New Yorkers who stop on their way to Florida; a disabled black boilermaker challenges the sheriff's one-man rule; a community of some of the poorest black people in America organizes, fights and wins some victories; and then it's the eighties and it's all over.

Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale. And Here My Troubles Began* (Pantheon, $18). A story of Nazis and Jews in which the unbearable is approached through the diminutive, with cartoon cats and mice. Spiegelman found an unforgettable way to tell the story of his father, a tenacious fighter, and how the experience of Auschwitz made his father such an infuriating figure in his own life. Umberto Eco said it best about these little Jewish mice: "When they suffer, you weep."

ART WINSLOW

I'm not enough of a medium to contact *The Runaway Soul* or *Harlot's Ghost*, but even if I were, I'd be tempted to point the Ouija past the spirits of Brodkey and Mailer to spend a few hours with Tom Spanbauer and his *Man Who Fell in Love With the Moon* (Atlantic Monthly Press, $21.95). All three are novels about identity, but the last is not a baggy balloon of language like the first two, and it exhibits an imagination that would be picaresque if a tad less earnest. Spanbauer's novel drifts around like the snow that falls so critically in its plot: Narrative time is whited out, and we are enveloped in the world of a half-breed male prostitute in the mining town of Excellent, Idaho, at the end of the last century, along with Damn Dan, Billy Blizzard, Abraham Lincoln (a horse), Metaphor (a dog), and a handful of characters that Twain could have created had he been part Brautigan as well. There's a gay twist on the Oedipal story, and I suppose I should warn that this could be termed an Anatomically Correct Novel—it doesn't shrink from any physiognomic corner of the human condition, that is, and has the descriptions to prove it. I should also mention that Tom is a friend of mine; but rest assured, outposts of bleachy integrity such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have given him a thumbs-up, too.

Other fiction that deserves more of a look—and this by definition excludes Big Books: *How the García Girls Lost Their Accent*, by Julia Alvarez (Algonquin Books, $16.95), a spirited first novel on the immigrant experience by a writer born in the Dominican Republic; *Ten Seconds*, by Louis Edwards (Graywolf, paper $8.95), a young black writer whose novel is a bit impressionistic but full of heart; and, if you have the feeling you could read Bret Easton Ellis if only he had a new head sewn on, check out Carolyn See's L.A. in *Making History* (Houghton Mifflin, $19.95)—it's a *Less Than Zero* for grown-ups. Two anthologies just out bear mention as well: the annual *Best American Short Stories* (Houghton Mifflin, $19.95), this year guest-edited by Alice Adams, is an unusually strong edition (Alice Munro's "Friend of My Youth," the powerful title story of her last collection, is one of the entries). And

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anyone interested in a sampler of Latin American fiction might find *A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes* (Dutton, $21.95) appropriate; the usual suspects can be found within, though with twenty-six writers represented it is reasonably broad. Lastly on the fiction front, I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you about the Library of America's new two-volume set of *Richard Wright: Works* (set $70; per volume $35). Edited by Arnold Rampersad, it is the first edition of Wright's works to appear unexpurgated—now included is a movie theater scene from *Native Son*, for example, that prefigured Pee-Wee Herman by fifty years but was kept in the dark all this time.

"A crutch-walker's hands are his bread and butter. . . . I had loved them since the age of twelve, when I first started to walk on braces and crutches and I first realized the magnitude of my debt to them," writes Leonard Kriegel in *Falling into Life* (North Point, $19.95), a willful set of essays organized around the fact that he has had to deal with handicap since boyhood, but one purged of easy sentiment about "overcoming challenges." (He was unfortunate enough to have his publisher go under, but Farrar, Straus & Giroux is distributing the North Point list.) Finally, in a holiday season when so many are out of work, I'd like to mention Philip Levine. His book of poems *What Work Is* won the National Book Award this year, but Knopf also brought out the *New Selected Poems* ($24), in which blue-collar life sometimes glows like hot pig iron. Here's a bit of "A Walk With Tom Jefferson": "another kid just up/ from West Virginia asked me/what was we making,/and I answered, I'm making/ 2.25 an hour,/don't know what you're/ making, and he had/to correct me, gently, what was/we making out of/this here metal, and I didn't know."

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JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

"In amorous life, the fabric of incidents is of an incredible futility, and this futility, allied with the highest seriousness, is literally unseemly. When I seriously envisage committing suicide because of a telephone call that doesn't come, an obscenity occurs which is as great as when, in Sade, the pope sodomizes a turkey. But sentimental obscenity is less strange, and that is what makes it more abject; nothing can exceed the unseemliness of a subject who collapses in tears because his other behaves distantly, 'when there are still so many men in the world who are dying of hunger, when so many nations are struggling for their freedom, etc.' "

And yet . . . And yet . . . as Roland Barthes elsewhere deciphers in *A Lover's Discourse*—an iridescent gift (in Richard Howard's 1978 translation from Hill and Wang)—it is the lover's bare transgression against *reasonableness, modernity, keeping things in proper perspective*, against a continent of "correct" behavior, that grants amorous life its perverse nobility; also its solitude. "Alone and exposed," the lover is drawn to those who understand, who have spoken, the same carousel language, and who through art have contained love's unruly passions just enough to evoke in their fellows a smile of affirmation: "Yes, how true."

It is not that Ben Sonnenberg's *Lost Property: Memoirs & Confessions of a Bad Boy* (Summit, $18.95) describes a world at all familiar. (If it did, it would not be such good entertainment.) Here is the story—a multitude of stories actually, set out in classical style, with numerous turns, jokes, amusing footnotes, learned asides and grab-shot gossip ("She told me how vain [Bertrand] Russell had become. 'Well, of course, he was always vain, but now he turns the spoons around so he can see himself reflected in the backs and he purses his lips and primps.' ")—of Sonnenberg's passage from sometimes wicked child of privilege to sexual and intellectual errant to bold editor of one of the great journals of our time, *Grand Street*, which he founded and directed for nine years until M.S. forced him to give it up.

Perhaps because most of the book was dictated, it has the implicating quality of conversation; like *Grand Street*, which though stern in its absolute reflection of one man's taste was never obvious, it lures you into a kind of communion with the shaping presence behind it. The book's subject may be at times overbearing, at times impossible, even cruel—also puckish, tenderhearted, daring even to the ridiculous—but its creator (who is, of course, at once subject and narrator as well) remains the magical center, the touchstone of what in many ways is the tale of a lover's progress, with its shames and virtues, leaving unspoken but not unknown confirmation of what Barthes called the "long chain of equivalences [that] links all the lovers in the world."

The following books by Nation *editors, columnists and contributing editors have been published in the past year.*

Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel. *Voices of Glasnost*. Norton. Paper $12.95.

Arthur C. Danto. *Cindy Sherman: History Portraits*. Rizzoli. $45.

Thomas M. Disch and Charles Naylor. *Neighboring Lives*. Johns Hopkins. Paper $13.95.

Tom Disch. *Dark Verses and Light*. Johns Hopkins. $26. Paper $12.95.

Tom Disch. *The M.D.: A Horror Story*. Knopf. $22.

Molly Ivins. *Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?* Random House. $23.

Michael Klare. *World Security: Trends and Challenges at Century's End*. St. Martin's. $45. Paper $27.

Victor Navasky. *Naming Names*. Penguin. Paper $9.95.

Marcus G. Raskin. *Essays of a Citizen*. M.E. Sharpe. $27.50.

Edward W. Said. *Musical Elaborations*. Columbia. $29.

Kirkpatrick Sale. *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*. Plume. Paper $12.95.

Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf, eds. *The Gulf War Reader*. Times Books. $15.

E.P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. Merlin Press (U.K.). £25.

Calvin Trillin. *American Stories*. Ticknor & Fields. $19.95.

Calvin Trillin. *An Education in Georgia: Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, and the Integration of the University of Georgia*. University of Georgia. Paper $12.95.

Katrina vanden Heuvel, ed. *The Nation: 1865–1990*. Thunder's Mouth Press. Paper $14.95.

Gore Vidal. *Hollywood*. Ballantine. Paper $5.95.

Jon Wiener. *Come Together: John Lennon in His Time*. University of Illinois. Paper $13.95.

Jon Wiener. *Professors, Politics and Pop*. Verso. $29.95.

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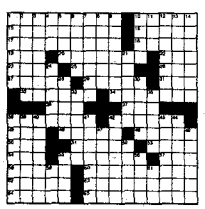

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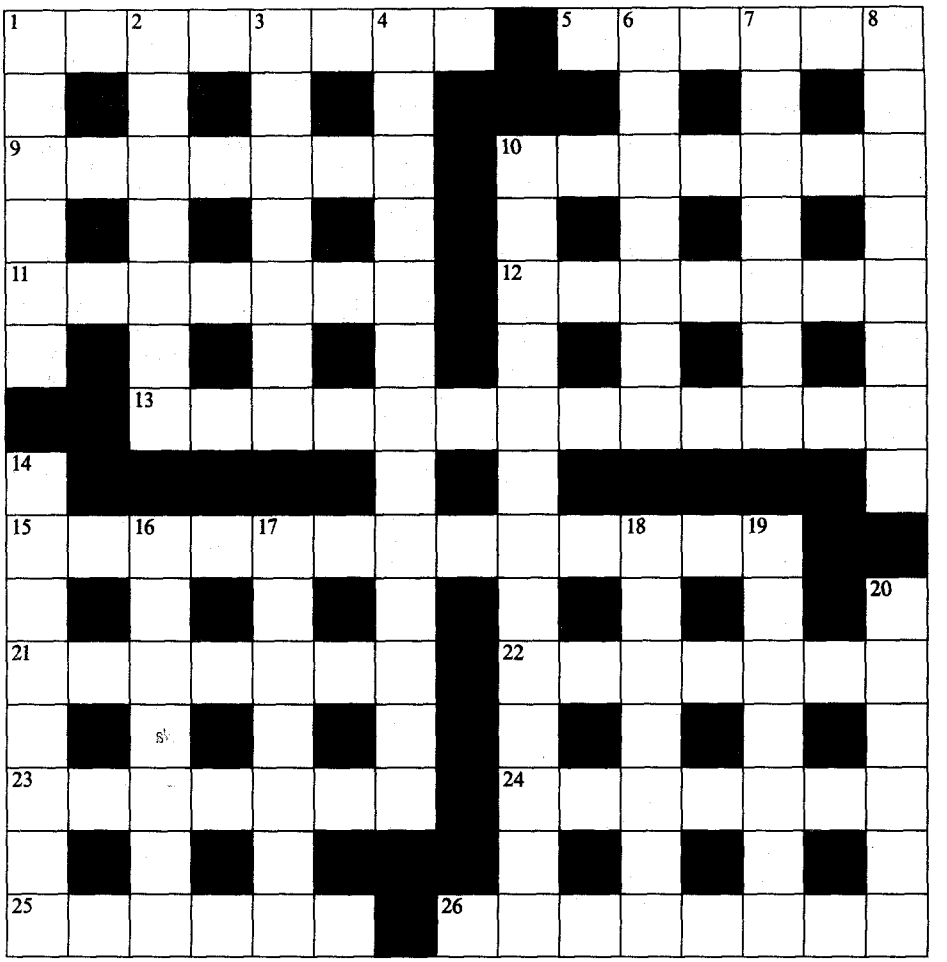
O	R	A	N	G	E	B	O	W	L	■	U	S	E	D
U	■	D	■	R	■	R	■	E	■	E	■	I	■	I
R	A	V	I	O	L	I	■	I	M	P	O	S	E	S
S	■	E	■	A	■	G	■	R	■	I	■	T	■	P
■	B	R	A	N	C	H	E	D	■	C	R	E	D	O
E	■	S	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	Y	■	R	■	S
N	I	E	C	E	■	E	X	O	R	C	I	S	T	S
C	■	■	■	P	■	S	■	V	■	L	■	■	■	E
O	U	B	L	I	E	T	T	E	■	E	L	V	E	S
U	■	U	■	D	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	I	■	S
N	A	C	R	E	■	V	I	S	I	T	O	R	S	■
T	■	K	■	M	■	I	■	T	■	A	■	T	■	F
E	A	R	L	I	E	R	■	O	B	S	C	U	R	E
R	■	A	■	C	■	T	■	C	■	T	■	A	■	A
S	O	M	E	■	J	U	N	K	D	E	A	L	E	R

Crossword Puzzle No. 2364

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 In truth, Miss Miles really goes to town! (8)
5 A place in the barn sometime? How about May, perhaps? (6)
9 One is reputedly a show-off. (7)
10 The time of Chicago as the old operator got called. (7)
11 There's a good example of what one does to things out of the freezer. (7)
12 One's tingling shows what the birds might be doing. (7)
13 Stop one talking at great length? One goes from bad to worse with it. (13)
15 What helped win WW II is very good, as the youngsters say, for the hair. (13)
21 Makes things worse for less than a thousand couples, but also implies songs of the spirit. (7)
22 Could be a goner, ending up with nothing to spice things up, possibly. (7)
23 In the makeup of David, it yet shows eagerness. (7)
24 Said to be applied excessively to injuries. (It's a pretty bad sin, lust!)(7)
25 Make certain to be seen, as it might be, around the old city. (6)
26 Put up with Mrs. Nixon, and you shouldn't be dealt anything more. (5,3)

DOWN

1 Important people have a sign of hesitation inside, as symbols of treachery. (6)
2 Looks as though you had pains all over again, but got someplace, too. (7)
3 How to calm down the worker's agitation with something to take the heat off? (7)
4 What really earnest thieves do, as we might with some work. (4,9)
6 Men are confused in the far east, but what do I do with it? I forget! (7)
7 In it Aries comes up with something to drink. (7)
8 Like Mozart, it could imply a big pack! (8)
10 One might bend over backwards to please you. (13)
14 One of 1 down, getting angry with what the Cockney is supposed to use incorrectly. (8)
16 It evidently isn't Mom furnishing pastries for those that reputedly put you to sleep. (7)
17 Mountain more like the plains of Spain? (7)
18 He started something by the rude bridge. (7)
19 Standard operating procedure when about to telephone for seafood? (7)
20 Women once might have found it confining to have such a peculiar escort. (6)

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. Find out why "little skipper" is a "truant." Send for a free copy of Frank W. Lewis's Ground Rules to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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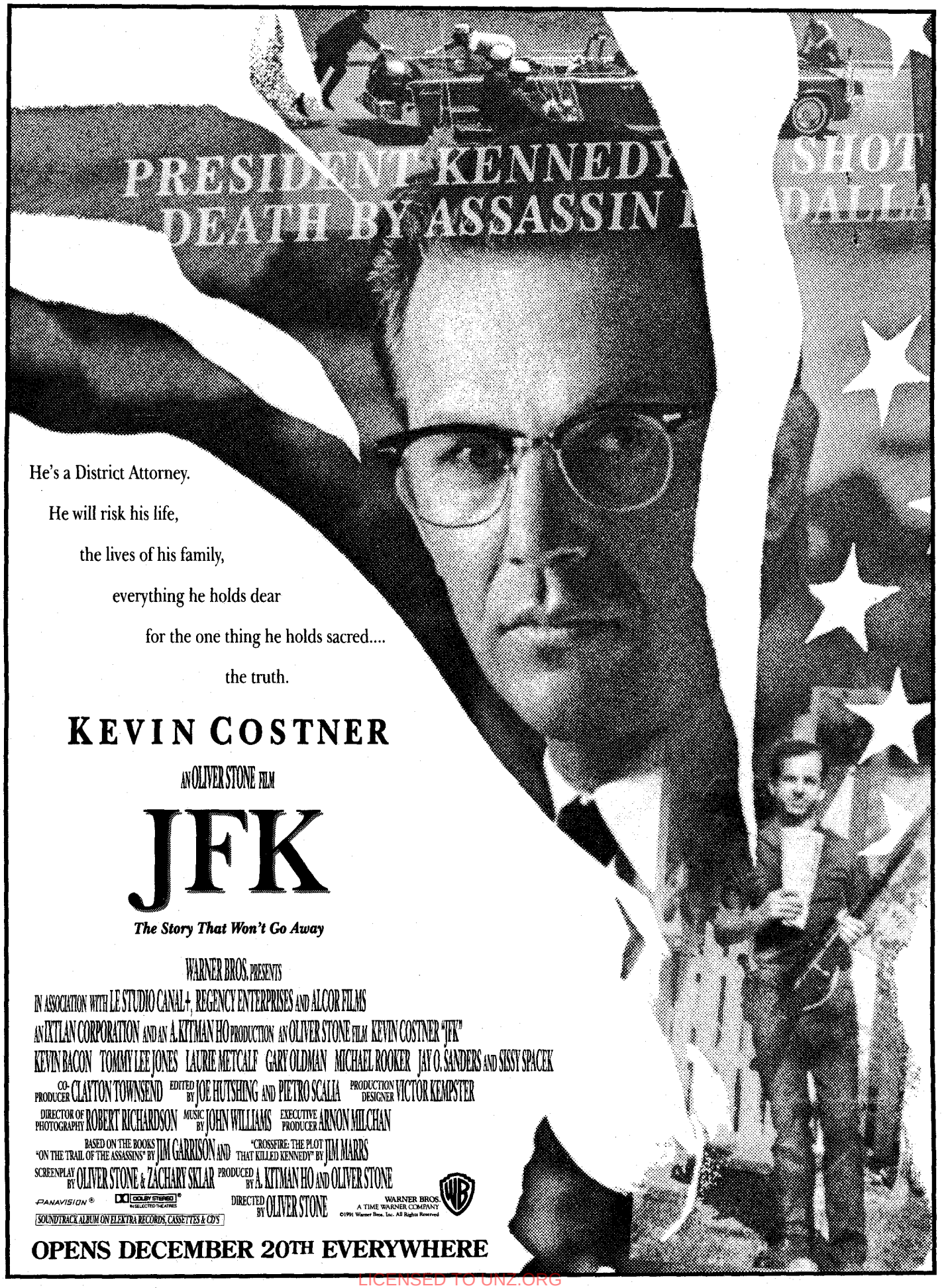
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